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COMPLIMENTARY

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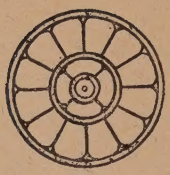

What you are not able
to do today, you will achieve
tomorrow. Persevere and
you shall conquer.

The ADVENT

NOVEMBER, 1960

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We climb ill if we forget our base.

SRI AUROBINDO

Vol. XVII. No. 4 November, 1960

THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIALS*

MOTHER'S COMMENTARY ON THE DHAMMAPADA

I

Verses in Pairs

EVERY Friday I shall read out a few verses of the Dhammapada, then we shall meditate on that text. This is to teach you mental control. If I think it necessary I shall give you an explanation also.

The Dhammapada begins with verses in pairs; here is the first one : [1]

* Based on the Mother's Talks.

[1] The English translation given here is done direct from the original Pali instead of being a translation of the French translation upon which Mother's commentary is based.

Mind is the foremost of all movements, mind is the highest of all movements, mind enters into all movements.

Naturally, the question here is about the physical life, there is no question of the universe.

If with an evil mind you speak or act, suffering will pursue you even as the wheel of the cart does the hooves of the bullock.

That is to say, ordinary human life, such as it is in the present world is ruled by the mind; therefore the most important thing is to control one's mind; so we will follow a graded discipline as stated in these "paired" verses of the Dhammapada in order to develop and control our mind.

There are four movements which are usually consecutive, but which at the end may be simultaneous : to observe one's thoughts is the first, to watch one's thoughts is the second, to control one's thoughts is the third and master one's thoughts is the fourth. To observe, to watch, to cotrol, to master. All that to get rid of an evil or wrong mind, for we are told that the man who acts or speaks with a wrong mind is followed by suffering as closely as the wheel follows the hooves of a bullock that ploughs or draws the cart.

This is our first meditation.

*
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Mind is the foremost of all movements, mind is the highest of all movements, mind enters into all movements. If with a clean mind you speak or act, happiness will follow you even like your never-failing shadow.

This is the counterpart of what we read last time. Dhammapada puts a clean mind in opposition to an evil mind. We have already said that there are four successive stages for the purification of the mind. A purified or clean mind is naturally a mind

that does not admit any wrong thought, and we have seen that the complete mastery of thought which is required to gain this result is the last achievement in the four stages I have spoken of. The first is : to observe one's mind.

Do not believe that it is a very easy thing, for to observe one's thoughts, you must first of all separate yourself from them. In the ordinary state, the ordinary man does not distinguish himself from his thoughts. He does not even know that he thinks. He thinks by habit. And if he is asked all on a sudden, "What are you thinking of ?", he knows nothing about it. That is to say 95 times out of a hundred he will answer, "I do not know". There is a complete identification here between the movement of thought and the consciousness of the being.

To observe the thought, the first movement then is to withdraw yourself and look at it, to separate yourself from your thoughts so that the movement of the consciousness and that of thought may not be confused. Thus when we say that one must observe one's thoughts, do not believe that it is so simple; it is the first step. I propose that this evening in our meditation we take up this first exercise which consists in withdrawing oneself from one's thought and looking at it.

*
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"I am blamed, I am beaten, I am defeated, I am robbed"—
they who cherish such thoughts can never quieten their enmity.

The Dhammapada tells us first of all that bad thoughts bring in suffering and good thoughts bring in happiness. Now it gives examples of what are bad thoughts and tells us how to avoid suffering. Here is the first example, I repeat : "I am blamed, I am beaten, I am defeated, I am robbed"; and it adds : "They who cherish such thoughts can never quieten their enmity".

We have begun our mental discipline, basing ourselves on the successive steps of mental development and we have seen that

this discipline consists of four consecutive movements, which we have described and which you surely remember : to observe, to watch, to control and to master; and in the course of the last lesson we have learnt—I hope so—to withdraw ourselves from our thoughts in order to be able to observe them as an attentive spectator.

Today we have to learn how to watch these thoughts. At first you look at them and then watch them. We learn to look at them as an enlightened judge so that we may distinguish between the good and the bad, between what are useful and what are harmful, between constructive thoughts that lead to Victory and defeatist thoughts which take us away from it. It is this power of discernment that we must acquire now, that will be the subject of our meditation tonight.

As I have told you, the Dhammapada will give us examples, but examples are examples. We must ourselves learn how to distinguish thoughts that are good from those that are not, and for that you must look, as I have said, like an enlightened judge —that is to say, as impartially as possible; it is one of the indispensable conditions.

*
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"I am abused, I am beaten, I am defeated, I am robbed"—
They who do not cherish such thoughts will have their enmity quietened.

This is the counterpart of what we read the other day. There is no question here only of thoughts that produce hatred. It is because hatred, with jealousy, is one of the most wide-spread causes of human misery.

But how not to have hatred ? A large and generous heart is certainly the best means, but it is not within the reach of all. Controlling one's thought may be of more general use.

Thought control is the third step of our mental discipline. Once the enlightened judge of our consciousness has distinguished between useful and harmful thoughts, the inner guard will come

and allow to pass only approved thoughts, refusing strictly admission to all undesirable elements.

With a lofty gesture the guard will stop entry to every bad thought and push it back as far as possible.

It is this movement of admission and refusal that we call thought control and this will be the subject of our meditation tonight.

*
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By being an enemy enmities are never quietened here below, they are quietened only by not being an enemy,—such has been the Law Eternal.

This is one of the most celebrated verses of Dhammapada, one of those most often cited—I would have liked if I could say, "most often obeyed in the world", unfortunately that would not be true. Because people speak much about this teaching but do not follow it.

Yet, there is one aspect of the problem which is less spoken of but which is more urgent if you want things to change in the world, some thing to which people give very little thought. I shall surprise you. It is this. If love must answer to hatred to enable the world to change, would it not be still more natural that love should answer to Love ?

If one sees what the life and action and heart of men are, one would be justly surprised at all the hatred, contempt, at best, the indifference which answer to this immensity of Love which the divine Grace pours upon the world, this immensity of Love which acts upon the world every second to lead it to the divine delight and which finds so poor an answer in the human heart. But people have compassion only for the wicked, the deficient, the unwelcome, for fruits dry and spoilt—truly it is an encouragement to wickedness and failure.

If one thought a little more of this aspect of the problem, perhaps one would need less to insist on the necessity of answering

hatred by love, because if the human heart responded in all sincerity to the Love that is being poured into it with the spontaneous gratitude of a heart which understands and appreciates, then things would change quickly in the world.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE NEW AGE

CHAPTER I

THE DAWN FIRES

"Bathe, O disciple, thy thristy soul
in the dew of the dawn." —Goethe(Faust)

THE splendour of the sunrise emerges out of a struggle between dawn and darkness. It is a long struggle in which darkness appears at first to get the better of its child adversary. It gathers in sullen masses as it closes round and swallows up the first pale flush, the vague, hesitant glimmer of the dawn. Thin, palpitating threads of dewy light pierce into its thickening density, but it engulfs them all in its enormous folds with an air of lofty disdain. A modern realist, true to his sense-bound faith, if he were watching this unequal contest, would surely despair of the victory of the dawn, and resign himself to the rule of darkness[1]; for, to him, that would be the most tangible reality for the moment. But the tender dawn is unflagging in its advance. Waves of its filtering radiance roll across the massive negation of the gloom, the black fury is shot through with shafts of rose and saffron. Then floods descend, an avalanche of liquid gold. Lashed, routed, scattered into floating rags of grey, darkness scurries across the sky only to melt away in a sudden burst of invading light. The east now glows with gold and fire, and the sun-god shines in the smiling blue of the conquered heaven.

Such, indeed, has been the slow emergence of the dawn of the New Age out of the chaotic dusk of the age that is passing. A crucial struggle, a chequered, precarious travail is the price earth has to pay for her long-cherished dream of a golden Age

[1] "The swift succession of catastrophic events on a steeply mounting gradient inevitably inspires a dark doubt about our future, and this doubt threatens to undermine our faith and hope at a critical eleventh hour which calls for the utmost exertion of these saving faculties. Here is a challenge which we cannot evade, and our destiny depends upon our response."—A. J. Toynbee

of the Spirit. Often the odds are ranged heavily against her, the forces of darkness rally in grim determination to thwart her destiny. They close in upon her, and it appears as if everything was going to be lost—all the priceless treasures of her thought and culture—for ever ! Stubborn in blindness, man seems to invite his own doom. But arrows of light cleave through the gloom, voices from above beckon to the soul of man, and, faith and hope reviving in his breast, he strains after the distant gleam.

This is the hour of God. When darkness threatens to devour everything and the soul of man lies prostrate in the dust, its anguished prayer climbs up to God, calling down a rain of Grace. Those who are the leaders of modern society do not appear to be aware of their inner bankruptcy. They are moved like puppets by forces the real nature of which is hidden from them. Their vision clouded, their will perverted, and their strength usurped by the forces of evil, they are bent on destroying what the genius of man has created through centuries of devoted labour. But God is there, overruling and indwelling the cosmic play. Rudra is sweeping away the smoking debris of the past, so that Vishnu may begin a new cycle of creation, a new order of life. The hour of God is the dawn of an era in which Heaven seeks union with the Earth, and Sarama, the Hound of Heaven, pursues the runaway man.

But what we call the Hour of God, the New Age, is not the Modern Age. The Modern Age began in the West in the Renascence, and then spread to the whole world, as we shall try to see as we proceed.[1] It already wears a grizzled look. Janus-like it stands today, facing both light and darkness. The point of intersection of the Modern Age and the New Age is a *Yuga-sandhi*, a juncture of evolution. The Modern Age has conceived and given birth to the New Age, as the darkness of the night conceives and gives birth to a new dawn. But the seed of the dawn which the night conceives comes from afar—it is a gift of Light.

[1] We propose to pass in rapid review the birth and development of the Modern Age, so that we can see how it is inevitably leading to the dawn of the New Age.

The night preserves and nourishes it, and when it is about to emerge and affirm itself, the dark mother opposes the emergence. That is what the Modern Age is doing. It has conceived many great ideas, revolutionary visions of the unity, freedom and perfection of man—ideas and visions that no preceding age in the history of man had ever dreamt of. But it has let loose the very forces that oppose the realisation of those ideas and visions. The dawn of the New Age is emerging out of a clash of these contrary factors. In the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, that which resists really assists. The magnitude of the opposition is the measure of the glory of the New Dawn.

Renascence broke upon Italy like a spring of joy and beauty, and, permeating practically the whole of the West, brought about the birth of the Modern Age. It was, in fact, a new birth, a renewal of life. It was a time when men, disgusted with scholastic abstractions and chafing against the shackles of outworn religious creeds, turned with a surging vitality to explore heaven and earth, life and nature—new seas, new continents, new ideas, and new avenues of artistic creation and human perfection. Renascence saw the loosening of many age-old bonds, the opening of new horizons, mental and material, and a general awakening of interest in man, the individual, and his freedom to deal with the practical problems of his life and his secular and social affairs. It harked back to the classical spirit of the ancient times and drew its chief inspiration from it. It restored to the West the double strain of the Greco-Roman culture: on the one hand, the unfettered curiosity of the Greek mind; its insatiable thirst for knowledge; its spirit of adventure and exploration; its unbounded delight in beauty of man and nature; and, above all, its employment of reason for the discovery of truth; and, on the other hand, the robust practical sense of the Roman mind, its power of manipulating the material forces of life; and its firm grasp of the principles of social order and organisation. It encouraged humanism, which consisted, at first, in a return to the Classics, and then in the pursuit of secular and social humanitarian

interests. Favoured by geographical discoveries of an immense importance and the opening up of the ocean routes to the Far East and America, the invention of paper and printing, and the fresh impetus given to education, its new ideas, the vigour and buoyant confidence of its individualistic upsurge, its mounting interest in the creations of literature and the fine arts, and, above all, its passionate love of life and its hedonistic delight in beauty, began to spread across seas and lands to many parts of the world. More than a revival of learning, it was a recovery of the aesthetic sense of the Greek mind. The art it produced in the creations of Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Raphael and Titian is unsurpassed in sublimity of conception, graceful delicacy of execution, and the splendour of expression. Art tended to break away from the religious conventions of the mediaeval times and interest itself more and more in the beauty of the natural world. Poetry and drama tended in the same direction.

Renascence was, indeed, a bold and shattering revolt against the dead conventions, the rigid formalism, and the ecclesiatical tutelage of the Middle Ages. It was an emancipation from the narrow, ascetic and cloistral spirit of the Church and its inhibition of individual thought and intiative. It was a sturdy denial of the domination of all cramping rules and dogmas. Though its achievements were not equal to its manifold aspirations—for it was more imitative than creative in the beginning, and drifted and dissipated itself in several ways—it yet paved the way for the phenomenal progress of the subsequent epochs by raising aloft the banner of reason and science, individualism and nationalism, and creating the right conditions for the advent of subjectivism, in which lie the seeds of the New Age. After the Symbolic, the Typal and the Conventional Age of human culture, the Age of Subjectivism comes to complete the cycle, and begin a new curve of evolution. The sub-rational ages of human history have been succeeded by the rational, which, in its turn, now tends to move forward to an age of supra-rational culture and civilisation. So does the soul of man evolve from Matter to Spirit.

(*To be continued*) RISHABHCHAND

SRI AUROBINDO LITERATURE (VIII)

Letters

WAY OF WORKS

ONE cannot but work, declares the Lord in the Gita. At every moment of our life we work in some way or other, we put out some energy consciously or unconsciously in the field of Karma. And where there is work there is usually a motive, a propelling factor that operates ceaselessly till the object is achieved and another replaces it. Normally the motive for work is based upon one's ego, self-interest, self-preservation, self-aggrandisement and even when it extends beyond the range of one's personal self, it is still for interests related to the larger extensions of that self in the family, the society, the nation etc. for the expression and affirmation of one's own ideas and ideals. Work so motivated and dictated by the demands of the ego continually forges fresh chains of Karma that keep the soul perpetually bound. For this reason, most spiritual disciplines counsel a gradual dissociation of the Purusha from the round of works, leaving the irreducible minimum to be performed by the mechanical Nature, Prakriti. In our Yoga, however, works are recognised as a God-given means of evolution and self-expression and valued as such. It is the motive that is sought to be changed. The usual impulsion based on the ego of the individual is to be replaced by a motive that derives from a deeper or higher origin, the psychic or the spiritual being. In this Path, works are directed to the Divine, performed for the Divine and even originated by the Divine. The individual remains but an instrument, a channel. Work is first used as a means for the establishment and the growth of self-dedication and consecration to the Divine and

then utilised as a field for the expression of the Divine Consciousness that is being gradually realised and imbibed by the sadhaka in the course of his sadhana in works.

In order to convert work into a means of sadhana one begins by offering the work that falls to one's share to the Divine. Once it is dedicated to the Divine, work acquires a sacred character. It cannot be done in a light manner; sincerity demands an appropriate order of application. An offering to the Divine has to be necessarily as perfect as possible and commensurate with his devotion there is an earnest attempt on the part of the sadhaka to do the work in a spirit of loving consecration. Every little part of it gains importance, no detail can now be left out imperfectly done. Further, it is no more the kind of work that truly matters but the spirit in which it is done. As the spirit of consecration grows, there is a happiness in the being, a stream of delight from the emotional and the psychic being converting the whole working into a rite of joyous progression in the Pathway to the Divine.

And in this process of doing one's best to make of work a worthy offering to the Adored, there is an automatic concentration of faculties and convergence of energies towards the One to whom the entire work is consecrated. Of course all this is not done in a day. It is not at once easy to remember continually the Divine to whom the offering is made. One forgets again and again and the mechanical habit of working asserts itself. Sri Aurobindo states encouragingly that to start with, it is enough to remember before the work is begun and to remember again with gratitude after the work is done. In between there are moments when one remembers; these should be steadily increased; if necessary, one can inwardly withdraw for a moment now and then, remember and renew the offering. If the initial will for consecration is sincere, one finds in the course of time that there are, as it were, two parts of oneself: one part that is engaged i work and the other silent, remembering the Divine. This calmn and quiet being comes forward at moments when there is a sus-

pension of the external preoccupation ; but it should be possible for the sadhaka to be more and more aware of its supporting presence even during activity. Gradually, increasingly, one comes to experience that the whole of oneself is this quiet and gathered being with only its frontal part doing the work.

This is the beginning. The work is offered to the Divine, but not the results ; they are sought after still on the basis of the desire. The next step is to offer the fruits too to the Divine. Let the result be what the Divine determines, let me work irrespective of what they might be, leaving it to Him to make of them what He will. That is the attitude to be adopted by the sadhaka. If sincerely accepted and cultivated, this attitude gradually eliminates the claim and the domination of ego and desire and promotes a certain equality in the mind. For once both the work and its fruits are offered to the Divine, there is no straining for a particular personal result, no agitation of anxiety or fear of reverse ; whatever the results they are taken as indicating the Divine Will. The human will becomes only the servant of the Divine Will.

To be the servant of the Divine is only the first step. To be an instrument is the next. For this purpose the sadhaka has to invoke the Divine Shakti to take up the work and do it through him. And for this to be possible there are a few minimum conditions to be fulfilled. In the first place, there must be a sufficient degree of purity in the being, especially in the vital and the mental energies ; the claims and preferences of the ignorant mind and the habits of the ego-ridden life-being shall not be allowed to interfere with the guidance and the working of the Higher Force. There has to be a steady and effective elimination of these impurities from the system. A sufficient measure of Equality and Quiet in the mind, in the face of all likes and dislikes, all contradictions and oppositions that assail the worker, is indispensable and that can be developed only on the basis of a strong Faith, faith that all is determined by the Sole Divine and in spite of appearances all leads in sum to the result intended by the Divine. Only in

such a state of quiet faith can one become aware of the presence and working of a Higher Shakti, the Divine Consciousness and Force. And becoming aware, one has to open oneself—in the static as well as in the active condition — to that Consciousness and to no other influence. Then the Force to which one opens oneself begins to act, first in moments when one is receptive, then in stretches of receptive periods and then longer and longer. There is not only a constant guidance and impulsion to do what is to be done, but also a vigilant and forceful pulling back from what should not be done. The human will and energy are taken up by the Shakti which makes them its channel and through them executes its purpose. All the while, it will be noted, the human consciousness goes on receiving the impacts and the pressure of the Divine Consciousness and Force ; on the human side from below there is a rigorous discipline processing the system in the way of concentration, purification, dedication and receptivity to the Divine. All work becomes a sadhana to grow into the rising altitudes of the Divine Consciousness and receive the incoming Force and Illumination in one's own person.

Not only a means of ascent to the highest but more. Work is simultaneously a means to express what one acquires by way of enlightenment of will and power, increasing purity of motive and illumination of energy. In short, work becomes a field to bring out the inner gains, confirm them in the outer nature also by accustoming its faculties to express them infallibly. Further, once the individual is equipped as an instrument, the Divine Force that acts need not be limited in its dynamics by the imperfections of its nature. It can act in its own full power using the instrument as a readied medium. It may also—and usually does—train and perfect the instrument by acclimatising it to the workings of its higher nature, naturalising in it the vibrations and movements of a higher Knowledge and Power. The sadhaka develops into a potent centre for the greater radiation of spiritual energy in the world.

M.P. PANDIT

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE VEDANTA

Ekamevadvitiyam

"In liberation the individual soul realises itself as the One (that is yet Many). It may plunge into the One and merge or hide itself in its bosom—that is the *laya* of Advaita ; it may feel its oneness and yet, as part of the Many that is the One, enjoy the Divine that is the Visistadvaitic liberation ; it may lay stress on its Many aspect and go on playing with Krishna in the eternal Brindavan, that is the Dvaita liberation. Or it may, even being liberated remain in the Lila or Manifestation, or descend into it as often as it likes. The Divine is not bound by human philosophies—it is free in its play and free in its essence."

SRI AUROBINDO

THE test of a system in Indian thought is its capacity to grant liberation (*mokṣa*). This test is inescapable and it is the differentia between Western philosophy and Eastern Philosophy. True love of wisdom which is the meaning of philosophy is to be had not in pursuing what is said to be truth but the wisdom that is life in freedom. Thus whatever secures freedom for the self is philosophy and not merely an intellectual edifice erected by the logic of the finite mind or bondage and called a systematic presentation of Reality in terms of the intellect. Once this is grasped it naturally follows that Vedanta is not a mere intellectual construction nor a dialectical display of system but a profound search for the final liberation which alone would present a Vision or in a Vision (*darśana*) the Ultimate Reality. Such a darsana would not only be a synoptic Vision but an organic whole which could be called a harmony rather than a synthesis

of standpoints. The manysided nature of reality is well known but its oneness is also what is perceived in a measure and in a sense even in our ordinary life but to reason and still more to our intuitive apprehension.

Sri Aurobindo may be said to follow the great leaders of Vedanta in so far as he has through his original approach of yogic *anubhava* and *ādhyātmic* (introspective meditative) approach sought to arrive at his own synthesis of the knowledge in the Veda, Upanishads, and Gita. The *prasthānatraya* or threefold texts for Vedanta are recognized to be the Upanishads, Vedanta Sutras and the Gita. Sri Aurobindo has not attempted to comment on the *Vedānta Sūtras* since its reference was to the Upanishads rather than to the Veda, and a direct awareness of the Upanishads provides all that is necessary for a fuller knowledge of the same. The *Vedānta Sūtras* are however valuable as a support for one's interpretation of the Upanishads. It is however Badarayana's synthesis of the teachings of the Upanishads and worthy of respect and regard. The question came up rather sharply when the same Sutras began to be considered as teaching as many divergent doctrines such as Advaita, Visistadvaita, Bhedabheda, Dvaita and so on and commentaries have been growing from time to time to defend one or other of these interpretations. When in recent times efforts have been made by Western savants (supported indeed by some in India), to explain that the Advaita is the thesis of the Upanishads, whereas Visistadvaita is that of the *Vedānta Śūtras*, the matter required a different approach. Indeed one has been forced to solve this divergency by an appeal to divine or intuitive experience if such could be got, and Sri Aurobindo instead of resorting to linguistic and other measures seriously took up the Yoganubhava for the knowing of the Vedic knowledge from which obviously all the Upanishahds as well as the Brahmanas were derived. The parlous state to which the Brahmanas had arrived thanks to the purely ritualistic interpretation of its profound truth had made the problem still more critical as there had grown a rift between the Brahmanas

and the Upanishads, very early—far earlier than Shankara himself. Thus the need for an integral approach to the problem of the Vedanta arose. As it is well-known Vedanta means the Philosophy of the Upanishads which form the concluding (*anta*) portion of the Vedic literature. Sabda or scriptural valid truth applies to the whole literature—mantra, brahmana and Upanishad and not to any one of them. The first integrality which Sri Aurobindo restored was the integrality of the triple (quadruple ?) strands of the Veda which in one sense can be said to be the adhidaivic, adhibhautik and adhyatmik portions but which in another sense, applies to the totality of the Vedic literature. It is however the adhyatmika approach that will prove fruitful in sadhana and attainment of liberation, not the others. Sri T.V. Kapali Sastriar has beautifully shown the relationship between the ritualistic interpretations of Sayana and the psychological interpretations of Sri Aurobindo in his studies entitled Lights on the Upanishads and Veda and other works. Sri M.P. Pandit also has attemped to continue the gallant work of Sriman Kapali Sastry in his Mystic Approach to the Veda and the Upanishads.

The Advaita approach claims to be based on the *anubhava* of oneness that comes to one who has strenuously contemplated on the basic sentences or propositions of the Scripture such as (i) *Tat tvam asi* (Thou art that); (ii) *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman); *So'ham asmi* (He or That am I); (iii) *Sarvam khalvidam Brahma* (All this verily is Brahman.), (iv) *Ekamevādvitīyam* (Only one without a second). It may well be asked whether mere contemplation of Brahman passages such as the above will lead to realisation of the truths contained therein. This *śruti-janya jñāna* is not enough. What is necessary is the attainment of the Brahman through devotion and grace.

To substantiate this view some schools of Advaita have recourse to the doctrine of Maya or illusion of the world and the individual selves, since it is said that there is only One entity and that is Brahman. This one being is to be known only through Scriptural teaching such being the nature of all other experiences

which only shew manyness and differences of all kinds.

There is hardly any doubt that there are two ways of approaching Reality, one by positive knowledge and another by negative knowledge. The positive knowledge grants us the knowledge of the Ultimate Being and the *Śruti* does give us positive or definitive knowledge which is not capable of being given by other means of knowledge such as perception, inference or analogy and so on. The negative knowledge proceeds by a series of steps denying the characteristics of the perceived and inferred and compared objects of the Ultimate. The former is called *saguṇa* and the latter *nirguṇa* approach. The *Śruti* contains both approaches. Mayavada however exalts the nirguna over the saguna, and relegates the latter to the level of maya-covered Absolute Brahman or *Āśvara*. The logic of negation dominates the whole approach and it is perhaps the climate of the times that this logic of the negative which was of the Nihilistic Buddhists was used to refute it also. That the principle of Negation is not a satisfactory principle can be shewn : it cannot give definite knowledge of anything and indeed all negation assumes positive existence and does not precede it. Thus the negative dialectic based on the finite logic cannot help to arrive at the goal of the Absolute and sole existence of Brahman, and it is with the help of a *tour de force* of psychologically doubtful value that the mayavada can be a solution. Nor is it the philosophy of the Upanishads taken as a whole or integrally. That reality is One and that this Oneness is Brahman that is Spirit different indeed from everything that we know or see is the truth to which it calls attention. But it hardly explains the existence of the many and the different kinds of many such as the conscient souls and inconscient matter (or atoms). To deny is not to explain. To grant even a phenomenal reality requires the explanation of their origin and illusion as such can explain nothing. The logic of abstract or absolute monism raises more problems not only for the finite mind but also for the Vedic mind, for the Vedic Mind did not deny plurality or manyness, nor hierarchy of the planes of exis-

tence, nor did it deny Oneness (*Ekam sat*). Thus the Advaita Mayavada is wrong but not Advaita, therefore thinkers have always striven to do justice to the twofold character of Absolute Reality.

Viśiṣṭādvaita and *Dvaita* and *Bhedābheda* do not accept mayavada, whilst they accept the principle of One Sovereign existence, Brahman, who is One only without a second. There is no second principle of Unity other than Brahman. That is why He is said to be the One and only Isvara or Godhead. Whilst Bhedabheda conceded that manyness is a passing affair, a temporary interlude when the Brahman is conditioned or self-conditioned, in the state of freedom the manyness is lost. In the creative period manyness exists, in the dissolution oneness remains. The former is due to creational condition, and is of bondage. Since freedom is the goal of life, one should seek to move towards the dissolution for attaining oneness with Brahman. This however is not again quite adequate for the explanation of the Vedic Oneness-Manyness. There are obviously logical difficulties too in this makeshift arrangement of the zones of manyness and oneness, even as in Mayavada. If we agree that Advaita need not be wedded to Mayavada or the refutation of Plurality, it follows that there can be other schools of advaita, which are more consistent expression of the Vedic *Ekam-Sat*.

Before we proceed let me state certain fundamental assumptions of all Vedantas :

1. There is one and only One Supreme Being or Existence. This is absolutely distinct in a sense from all that are seen also to exist, which are not supreme, divisible, divided and having the nature of dependents on something else for their being and nature.

1.a. The Supreme Principle which is One however sustains and supports and manifests and withdraws all the others.

1.b. This Supreme Principle is Vastness as well as Minutest. It is thus the internal and external principle of all that is vast and minute.

1.c. If we definitely assert that the Substance is that which is All and as such all are dependent on it, in the relation of attributes or modes or bodies, then there is Only One substance. All the rest are included in it.

2. That the Brahman can be known through a different method of Upasana (devotional contemplation through knowledge) and not through mere reciting, reading of scriptures, or works or charity or alms-giving, or mere sacrifice.

2.a. This is possible but one requires the grace of God, that arises through establishing mental peace (prasada) or silence that is spiritual.

2.b. To say that to be an object of knowledge is to be also inconscient is not necessary. To emphasize subjective knowing of the object or intuitive knowing of it is not the same as the objectification of the subjective or mental states. Advaita of Mayavada accepts this axiom which is not axiomatic.

2.c. Nor can it be said that to be a knower is the condition of all things at all times. This is the prerogative of the Supreme Brahman. Brahman is the Object of all souls for attainment of Him alone means liberation. Thus the Objectivity of God cannot be denied. Nor can the knowership of the Brahman be denied. Nor can it be said of the individual souls who have the dual capacity even like God of being objects of Grace of God and subjects of experience of Nature and God.

2.d. The only question then is about the World or Nature or the Inconscient (*acit*). Its existence is said to be of the enjoyability or the enjoyable. It is in that sense objectivity. But it is never without the Godhead and as such it derives a subjectivity of a peculiar kind of being enjoyable to the Divine. This subjectivity cannot be derived from the acceptance of its being conscious or animated by consciousness or entelechies or monads or jivas. All the universe being considered

to be thus a college of souls or an aggregate of them, at different levels of consciousness.

2.e. Thus Nature seems to be accepted as a triple threaded force or energy of sattva, rajas and tamas, (*rohita*, *śukla*, *kṛṣṇa* or or *tejas*, *ap* and *pṛithivī* which undergoes the modifications for the embodiment of the souls in manifestation.

2.f. It is possible that the threefoldness is a reflection or correspondence or degradation or grossening of the primal spiritual triplicity of sat, cit, ananda.

3. The transcendence of the Nature and mere isolated soul of souls is the goal of Being and the restoration of Reality to the soul as well as the restoration of the imbalance of Nature.

3.a. This is by a Return or nivritti to God beyond or above manifestation.

3.b. The Return is a withdrawal from the manifestation or the gross manifestation or even a subtle manifestation, for it is a return into God or Absolute Reality.
The renunciation of the relative reality follows as a consequence or the renunciation of attachment to whatever is offered by relative realities or some of them for the sake of higher and freer enjoyment of others, or it is the enlightened divine way of enjoyment of manifestation as the body of God which has been offered as the field of enjoyment.

3.c. The assertion of a world of enjoyment of unalloyed bliss beyond the world of karma such as the world of lower Nature is also the assertion of a transcendent way of enjoyment through God-knowledge rather than 'misery' (enjoyment with attached or selfish enjoyment of the soul.

Thus we find that the assumptions of the Vedanta point out to the necessity of a person for loving and attaining God or absolute Reality-status. This is the primary condition of all spiritual pursuit. All Vedantins accept that the moral and spiritual or yogic preparation is the *sine qua non* of spiritual ascent. The Causal Principle (*kāraṇa*) is to be attained (*kāraṇantu dhyeyaḥ* say the Vedanta

Sutras). The attainment of Brahman is a process of dedication or philosophy by which one grows into the being of Brahman. Thus the famous statement that one who knows Brahman attains Brahman. Being and Becoming become synonymous for the infinity of Being is such that it is a continuous becoming of oneself of its Nature. Frontal aspects (*pratika*) of Brahman are not Brahman for the Brahman has to be known from within through surrender and dedication or self-offering or sacrifice (*yajña*).

Mayavada we have shown does not recognize the reality of the process or even attainment for ultimately it culminates in a kind of non-creationism (*ajāta*). The static Reality is said to be permanent and the Real. However it is a radical intellectualism with the mystic concept of Unchanging Experience thrown in.

The problem of *Viśiṣṭādvaita* is not of the mechanical order of the dialectic. It is of the organic order. Reality is an organic unity in God of the souls (*cit*) and Nature (*acit*) with God as the Self of all. The very growth of the soul from its low state of bondage to freedom is assured by this ascent of the soul in God through the 'living breath of Grace' which sustains all its embodied as also its disembodied condition.

The problems raised by the Organic view are of a different kind. It is of course futile to compare and contrast the mechanical and the organical for the two have two different kinds of logic.

Metaphysical theories there have been which have explained the organic in terms of necessary relationships between the several parts of the organic whole which are necessary to each other. The whole is shewn to be necessarily sustaining the parts, and the parts are explainable only in terms of the whole and not in terms of other parts alone. Indeed the principle of consistency yields place to the principle of coherence or inherence or implication. The metaphysical idealists have thus made the organic just a variety of the necessary and have proceeded to reveal it in terms of the mechanical which is shewn to be just an aggregate.

There have been other organicists who have claimed to show the organic nature of the Process or Reality bringing in concepts

of ingression of elements into reality which makes and realises the unity of the whole.

Sri Ramanuja's organic theory does not explain reality by means of the principle of inseparable relationship (*aprathaksiddha sambandha*) alone, for he realises the need for the lower consciousness or mechanical to explain it. It is perhaps his covert suggestion that the extraneous concept of *samavāya* (inherence) should be better expressed as *aprathaksiddha-sambandha*). There are so many entities in the organic which claim separability but there are some which are not. The principle of inseparability is not so much between the substance and attribute as between a substance and its dependent substance. Thus the souls become dependent on the substance of God absolutely even like the body on the soul. The withdrawal of the soul from the body or material mansion means the death and disintegration of the latter, so too the withdrawal of God from the soul means its loss or disintegration of its consciousness. Sri Ramanuja emphasizes the need to recognize the dynamic nature of this metaphysical union or Organic in one's own experience.

The second characteristic of the Organic which we have begun to realise is the principle of Growth, evolution, and this means that we come back to the empirical level about the organism. This may be considered to be a set back and a return to empiricism from the scriptural transcendentalism. However the problem is serious and in fact it is one of the most important for raalisation means the attainment of that organic oneness with God so much so that one perceives that all that one does, sees, hears and experiences is all by the Divine Himself directly, and who carries the individual swiftly to the highest mansions of His being. The problem of religions is not so much the worship of gods or God but the attainment of that truth of one's being with God, the All, and through God with all the rest.

That there is to be an ascent or call it growth, to the highest level is the philosophic impulse which is undeniably secret in the hearts of all. That this ascent is seen to happen in some way by the

passing of certain forms of life and organic existence into higher and more perfect types of life and existence is also clear. Thus we have plant-life, animal-life and human-life broadly revealing the ascent of life-patterns and forms and the emergence of other forms of consciousness. Indian thought did conceive of there being a continuity and in a sense a passing of one kind of soul through maturity or other factors to the higher kinds of bodies and life and mind. Modern thought and science have put forward the theory of evolution as a principle of growth from form to form as well as the adaptation of forms to their changing environments which are constantly modifying themselves. Sri Aurobindo's Divine evolutionism realises the significance of the ancient intuition of progress through ascending births or re-births at different levels of consciousness ranging from the Absolute to the veriest concealed or veiled consciousness of the material called inconscient. This is possible because of the original impulse to descend and ascend the ladder of manifestation. If the first is called the descent (*avidyā*), plunging into inconscient, the ascent is the (*vidyā*). Together they complete the cycle of individual evolution. But it is not a solitary soul that is involved in this descent-ascent. It is the many of the One supreme Being who are in the throes of evolutionary descent and ascent. The problems of the evolution are in a sense empirical but in another sense they furnish a metaphysical proof of the problem of oneness-manyness which seem to be so characteristic of all search for Oneness. The Organic is one way of unity of one-many. The evolutionary process is another form of the organic. The organic form or pattern of reality rightly includes the reality of both the One and the Many. The many are subordinated to the One and the One is the self of the many, in every sense of the term, whether the many are conceived as souls or intelligences, or atoms, or Matter of the higher luminous stuff or of the inferior triple stranded stuff.

Sri Aurobindo's organic conception through evolution gives concrete shape and meaning to the metaphysical form of the

organic presented by Sri Ramanuja. In this sense it is richer and more germane to our sadhana, approach to the Divine by a direct plunge into the centre of our being or the heart. It is not enough to realise that one is a part or ray or many of Brahman's Organism, but it is necessary also to grow into Him to be in a sense filled by Him and be born of Him. The Upanishads are not unaware of this birth of the soul of Brahman, of becoming filled with Brahman, or growing in the vastness of Brahman or moving in the Brahman according to the Supreme Law of Being (*Rtam Bṛhat*)

The logic of the mechanical or rectilinear logic is replaced by the dynamic logic of the Organic of growth, of ascent, of liberation and birth in Brahman, surpassing or transcending ignorance that is confined to the search for freedom in the dark interiors of it which are revealed by such concepts as realisation without ascent or transcendence which truly are possible without realising or ascending since all are maya or illusion or limitations on the unchanging and non-many or One.

Sri Aurobindo's exposition of the several vidyas (or rather as shewn by Sriman Kapaly Sastry) show the absolute necessity for a dynamic conception of the Reality as a wonderful process of evolution which makes for the play of the Many in the One and of the One in the Many. The Lila is then not merely a mirage play or miracle play but a supreme Act of creative Delight which has been said to be the heart of Brahman. It is clear that Dwaita's supreme quality of differences together with the unifying doctrine of paratantrya or dependence lends itself to the play of the many in the One. The profound question would yet arise as to whether the many and the one are of equal status, in which case the many would not be the souls or atoms, but Brahman Himself.

Sri Aurobindo therefore considers that the Eternal One is also eternally many. This view is of course very basically different from the concept of many antaryamins since there will be the identification of the souls which are in evolution and involution in different levels and planes with the inner spirit immortal in all

on the one hand and on the other with the incarnating deity in the heart of the Devotees. This however explains the identity formula between the soul and God directly without the Ramanujaic concept of body (sarira).

Sri Aurobindo's Vedanta, if we may so speak of his interpretation of the Upanishads metaphysically, realises the organic view as also the peculiar kind of bhedabheda between the many and the one, not merely during the periods of creation and dissolution but eternally. There is a profound play of the two at all times, perhaps with the shift of poises when oneness is dominant and when manyness is dominant with perhaps an intermediating oneness-manyness realising itself in all manifestation and liberation.

The question of questions is whether this approach to the Upanishads will yield the results of a coherent philosophy. The answer to this question will be that it is only actual abhyasa or upasana of this profound psychological kind that will prove the rightness of this view. Dialectical thought and mere interpretation based on finite logistics will fail to satisfy much less explain the profound seer-wisdom of the Vedic Rishis and the mystics of the South. One has to enter into the practice or upasana, and psychological opening into the Ultimate Reality by intuition should naturally follow. The intuition of the unity of the Creative principle with the reality of the Oneness-Manyness is one of the most important discoveries of Sri Aurobindo. The further intuition that the above is the real amazing formula of the Vedic Rishis is of far-reaching importance. The formula that Sri Aurobindo has given has wonderful efficacy in its capacity to explain almost all divergent facts of the different areas of human life and culture and growth.

It is not merely a synthesis but rather an intuitive analysis of the nature of Reality in its basic twofold poises or diunities.

K. C. VARADACHARI

KRISHNA*

I

LIFE in this universe with its bedrock of Ignorance and inertia, its meandering streams and whirlpools of desire and its cloudy skies of gloomy thoughts and flickering half-truths and misleading lights, has always been a paradox and an insoluble enigma to the human reason. Its highest wisdom is the cultivation of a detached poise of contemplation of this meaningless sequence, with a tragic or comic perspective, a stoical endurance of the inevitable shocks in one's personal life and a comprehensive sympathy for all struggling mortals trying to snatch moments of pleasure in sensation and therefore forgetfulness from the agonising circumstances of this harsh world. But there is a deeper vision of the subliminal Intuition born of the cultivation of inner life by the practice of the methods of religious disciplines of purification and concentration and it declares that beyond the clouds is a whole region of multitudinous stars, moons and suns, angels, goddesses and gods and man can receive through the rifts in the cloudy sky of the mind or better still by clearing the mind of the thick cloud of thoughts a steady stream of the rays of these luminous bodies even in this mortal tenement and can indeed acclimatise and prepare himself for residence in those heavenly realms of light after shuffling off this mortal coil. This life is a preparation for another and greater, more glorious life; this world of darkness a prelude to the worlds of light. The way of wisdom is not to concentrate on the murky darkness but to contemplate with devotion on the lights beyond and merge with these when the muddy vesture of decay drops in death. This universe may have no meaning in itself but there are other luminous worlds which

* Sri Aurobindo's sonnet included in 'Last Poems'

can engage the energies of a man's life and this world forms a good training ground, in fact the best of all possible worlds from this point of view, for other worlds are not worlds of progress but of Bhoga or enjoyment of the accumulated stock of good and bad karma in this world. There is a whole hierarchy of the worlds of light, with the Heavens of the Overmind at the summit where the Supreme Lords, Shiva, Vishnu and Parashakti have their own home, the mental heavens below where the Rishis, Manus and Archetypal Thinkers enjoy the beatitudes of Thought and the vital heavens lower still where Indra, Manmatha and the celestial dancers revel in the ecstasies of aesthetic and sensual pleasures of the greatest intensities and varieties. Every man has only to choose his Ishta Devata according to his taste, temperament and degree or kind of light and delight he aspires to and undergo the discipline outlined so clearly in the Agamas and finally attain Mukti or release from this world negatively, and positively ananda of nearness, contact, mutual presence, mutual reflection, likeness and even identity—*sālokya*, *sārūpya*, *sādṛśya* and *sāyujya*—with his Ishta in His Heaven. There is a still more profound Intuition which directs its penetrating gaze behind and beyond all worlds and kinds of life, sees the very substratum of all, a vast Consciousness or Zero which contains all, the static foundation of all this dynamic play of force or manifestation. Behind the rock, the waters, the clouds and the light is the Supreme Ether in which all are, from which all have become and to which all have to return in the final dissolution. Here is the Heaven beyond all Heavens, a Heaven which is no Heaven. The supreme wisdom is to pass beyond all manifestation in oneself and the worlds one sees and be the Ether. The seer and the seen, the subject and the object (and therefore all lokas, worlds—*alokyante*, *atha eva lokaḥ*) are to be dissolved in the Consciousness of the Brahman, the Absolute. The real paradox is not so much the absence of purpose within the scheme of manifestation or the created worlds but the appearance of manifestation at all in the Unmanifest Ultimate Reality. *Aghtana ghatanapatiyasī māyā*. But there is a more

comprehensive vision and integral knowledge which sees the Supreme Reality as a Transcendent Purusha who includes and transcends the Saguna and the Nirguna and all manifestation in the created worlds is the play of this Purushottama with his Shakti, the Paraprakriti. So the supreme felicity for a mortal is to dissolve the ego in him which deludes him into assuming a separative and exclusive outlook, and live in the wider consciousness of the Divine Lord and see all as Vasudeva. *Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*. This magical Essence interpenetrates all and embodies as the ether the lights, the clouds, the waters and the rock. They are the deployings in several planes and poises of the same Sachchidananda. *Sarvāni Vignana vijrimbitani*. But even in this view this universe has no special purpose in its organisation except to serve as one variation on the theme of the play of Conscious Force and perhaps the strangest and most fantastic because the foundation of all here is the very denial of light, the most obscure Inconscient. This world is a demonstration that the Superconscient can masquerade even with the cloak of the Inconscient. This monstrous python, the black dragon of the Inconscient adorns the body of the Superconscient Siva. But there is a crowning spiritual experience of the Supramental World-vision which sees the Purushottama as drawing all towards Him and pouring all Himself into the created world and therefore transforming it progressively into His image. The Divine is a great alchemist infusing the elixir of His magical Essence into all the elements from the Ether down even to the rock and transmuting them into the gold of His divinity. Sri Aurobindo's sonnet, *Krishna*, describes this profoundest experience of the Transcendent Grace of the Divine Lover descending in answer to the human aspiration and therefore fulfilling the age-long quest and making the creation or manifestation meaningful and significant.

II

The supreme discovery and realisation of the meaning of the manifestation is the last reward of spiritual sadhana. It is at

once a great end and a greater beginning, the end of evolution in Ignorance and the beginning of evolution in Knowledge. The way up is the way down. As the consciousness of man ascends higher and higher in the realms of the Spirit above the mind, his knowledge of the realms of Matter below increases in width and depth. So it is only when he reaches inwardly the very highest level of the dynamics of consciousness, the Supramental Truth-consciousness, that the secret heart of the cavernous depths of the Inconscient reveals itself to his vision. Till then, however advanced spiritually, no light can illuminate the impenetrable darkness, no power can annul its iron determinism and no joy remain immune from its mighty assaults of pain. So the Yogin who has traversed the Intermediate zones of the spiritual consciousness and crossed the border of the Overmind which is the very summit and the very last reach of Mind and finally entered the Supramental Gnosis, announces :

> At last I find a meaning of soul's birth
> Into this universe terrible and sweet,
> I who have felt the hungry heart of earth
> Aspiring beyond heaven to Krishna's feet.

The cosmos with its innumerable individuals is the creation of the Transcendent Lord and so, only the man who has liberated himself from the cramping egoistic consciousness, widened his awareness to embrace the cosmos on all its levels and glimpsed the Transcendent pressing upon its highest summit can penetrate into the mystery of creation and solve the riddle of this world. For there seems to be no logic in that an immortal and eternal entity, a child of light and a spark of the infinite should enter into the realm of death, time, darkness and finiteness. Its entry into any scheme of finite creation is puzzling enough but it is the greatest of all paradoxes that it should choose this world which is set exactly at the opposite pole of anything spiritual, for everything here—body, life and mind—has evolved out of an In-

conscient base and therefore has always an inevitable downward gravitation. We have here only cages of iron, silver and gold all from the dark mines of the Earth for the bird of the spirit. And encircling them is the black dragon with yawning mouth, waiting unperturbed for its prey to fall into it to be swallowed out of life and shape. Terrible indeed. But the soul is an adventurer and this world has acquired for the soul an irresistible attraction —"an attraction which in human terms on the terrestrial level might be interpreted as the call of the unknown, the joy of danger and difficulty and adventure, the will to attempt the impossible, to work out the incalculable, the will to create the new and the uncreated with one's own self and life as the material, the fascination of contradictories and their difficult harmonisation. These things translated into another supraphysical, superhuman consciousness, higher and wider than the mental, were the temptation that led to the fall." Terrible and sweet; terrible and therefore sweet. "The hero soul is at play with Death's embrace, a wrestler in the dread gymnasium of Fate, engaged in Life's game of hazard terrible and sweet."

But the birth of the soul on earth has kindled in it and is in answer to an undying flame of aspiration. The mental, vital and physical formations of the earth are all possessed by an insatiate desire whose inmost core is this immortal aspiration. Desire is a perversion which makes a faculty seek what it really aspires for, in the external forms and not in the inner Essence, with passion and egoistic possessiveness and not with a self-giving self-identification and identity of consciousness. And so the mind aspires for Knowledge, the vital for Power and the body for Beauty though desire drives them to seek these in the wrong place and in the wrong manner. All human life on earth is one agonising cry of unfulfilled aspiration which is heard always deep behind the pleasures of satisfied desire or the pains of frustrated passion. So the heart of earth as different from the surface appearances is always hungry, for the outer world cannot give what it really aspires for. When we listen to this still, sad music of humanity

we realise that nothing finite can assuage its hunger and no organisation of worlds based on the principle of separation between the subject and the object is capable of answering to its aspiration. The yearning is for communion with the Eternal Personality of Ananda and Love in all the planes and parts of the being, here and now, on this bank and shoal of Time. No heaven can satisfy the hunger of the earth, for each heaven is only a world typal, fixed and finite in its nature containing and affording only refractions or reflections of the Divine Delight of Existence in some plane or other like sensations or imaginations, thoughts or ideas of various kinds and degrees of illumination, intuitions or even lights. And the earth seeks not refractions or reflections but the very source of all, the feet of the Divine Lord Krishna and an endless progression in intimacy with this *Anantakalyāṇaguṇa*. The search may be in ignorance and very obscure but Mother Earth has implanted in every one of her children this aspiration and indeed looks forward to man, the most self-conscious of her creations for its fulfilment. The sadhaka of integral yoga is a true child of the Earth inheriting this ardent longing and pushing forward in this grand quest and the adventure towards the Infinite Person, Krishna.

III

The sadhaka's integral aspiration makes him one homogeneous being and integrated personality, psychicised and spiritualised enough to help him ascend to the very heights and inwardly plunge into the very depths of his consciousness and so to have the Darshan of the goal of his Para Bhakti, the Transcendent and Immanent Purushottama, Visvamohana, Bhuvanasundara Krishna.

I have seen the beauty of immortal eyes,
And heard the passion of the Lover's flute,
And known a deathless ecstasy's surprise
And sorrow in my heart for ever mute.

He has looked alive upon the Eternal's face and drunk the infinite beauty like a giant's wine. He has seen the matchless harmony of shape and colour and light and aura; he has gazed at these windows revealing and radiating endless levels and depths and widths of beatitudes of light and love and harmony. Krishna is no cold, aloof and incommunicable impersonal Absolute but full of a divine love and divine compassion, a smiling kindliness and a playful gaiety. He is in love with this green earth and all the mortals who embody its aspiration. In fact the very hunger of the earth and man for His feet is the response to His magnetic Personality secretly immanent and drawing all, Akarshayan, towards Him by an entrancing music. "His flute calls the physical being to awake out of the attachments of the physical world and turn to the divine love and ananda that He embodies. It is the music of the call which seeks to transform the lower ignorant play of mortal life and bring into it and establish in its place the lila of His divine Ananda." He seems to pour all Himself into the music and listening to it one becomes aware of an overmastering and inordinate longing, passion, on His part for union with all the souls on earth and all the parts and planes of being evolved in and by the earth. The tunes of his music are not so much melodies produced by a divine ingenuity but the spontaneous outpourings of a heart of infinite and ardent love which cannot endure separation from His beloved creatures, so that one hearing his flute hears not a tune but feels the throb of the passionate heart of the Divine Lover. This is a splendid and enravishing surprise because the soul of the mortal was all along thinking that the Divine is a Person so august and mighty that He must be approached with reverence, not at all One who makes any advance on His side. Very often the sadhaka would have cried in ignorance when the path seemed full of thorns and the goal not at all in sight, about His cruelty and wantonness and so the surprise at feeling the fire-passion of Grace. 'When Love desires Love, Love is born' and when Love feels the Love of the beloved there is the consummation of Bliss, a deathless ecstasy. What a contrast to the brief

ecstasy experienced by the soul when it was held by life's alluring cry and the splendours of the surface ! The human heart has realised the Infinite Delight it has been all along aspiring for and so the still, sad music voicing its essential sorrow gives place to a pæan of joy and victory. No more the tyranny, the thrill or the thrust of desire and therefore sorrow for ever becomes mute, for the heart has now learnt to commune with the Divine Lover who is the Indwelling Lord of all objects and creatures and persons. The ascending movement of the human consciousness and aspiration towards the Divine is answered by the descending movement of the Divine Consciousness and Grace. The mounting Flame of aspiration, the God Agni calls the Divine Soma and the rain of His Grace. Not indeed immediately or even after a predictable interval or according to any decipherable law. All human tapasya and supreme efforts of concentration of consciousness are only attempts at self-purification leading to a sublime trance in waiting, so that at the divinely appointed moment of Siddhi, there is a sudden capture by an unexpected assault, a surprise, which gives to the realisation the highest intensity of excitement, an ecstasy. There is then a radical reversal of consciousness from the psychic and spiritual to the supramental rhythm. A revaluation of the entire past and a transvaluation of all values are the invariable results. And so there is not even the possibility of a sorrow in retrospective remembrance of the past, for every detail in life is seen as the necessary preparation, arranged by the Omniscient and All-merciful hand of the Divine Lover who has been engaged all along in leading the soul by the quickest, safest and surest of roads to a final union with and manifestation of Him. It is His saviour passion which has done the miracle of converting the mortal heart accustomed to the rhythms of earthly pleasure and pain, into a fit instrument for receiving and retaining the divine Ananda. 'The black fire of pain and the gold fire of rapture have striven towards one bliss and the soul has risen by them towards a supernal plane of power and love and deathless ecstasies.'

IV

The heart in man, the psychic-emotional centre is the nearest and the purest in him which opens to the depths and the heights, feels the selfless devotion, *ahaitukī bhakti*, to the Divine and receives the descending Ananda. Very often the sadhaka of the exclusive Bhakti Yoga, stations himself in this part of his being solely and enjoys the beatitude of divine union in his inner life and therefore gets the fulfilment of his personal aspiration. But the aspiration of the sadhaka of Integral Yoga has never been personal or fractional. In fact, it would be more true to say that Mother Earth, Nature aspires in and through him. So it is not only the pure emotional centre but also the vital and physical consciousness in him and the outer personality formed and carved out of the substance of earth-life which partake of the longing for the Divine. The heart is only the spearhead of attack and leader in the conquest of the kingdom of God. The Divine Lover uses the heart as a lever for the great work of transformation of the earth-consciousness. Descending into the heart and establishing His empire in it, He touches every other part and shapes it for His advent in it. So the vital, the vital-physical, the physical and the whole of Nature through these and in these hear the music of the Lover now quite near them, and quite audible to them.

> Nearer and nearer now the music draws,
> Life shudders with a strange felicity;
> All Nature is a wide enamoured pause
> Hoping her lord to touch, to clasp, to be.

The vital and physical consciousness (life) has already undergone a process of purification by tuning itself to the psychic-emotional centre and that makes it sensitive to the tunes of the music of the celestial Lover. Or rather, the Divine as Kali has prepared the mortal by her tragic and violent dance in his members, with opposition and the shocks of circumstance as her faithful attendants

and therefore given him the plasticity, inwardness and divine sensibility to make the sweet dance of Krishna in him possible. The music of Krishna is at the same time a symbol and a spiritually concrete description of the ways of the Divine with the human. The movements of the Divine are always harmonious, born of delight and bringing delight, emanating from regions behind and beyond the threshold of the cerebral brain-mind organisation of consciousness which is the realm of words and constructed speech and so appealing, awakening, influencing and even transforming the subtler and deeper layers of consciousness and personality in the most direct and dynamic manner conceivable. Every great creative artist bewitches his audience at first by the splendid audacities of his bold originalities and by slow degrees educates it to appreciate the subtleties and intricacies of his art. Appreciation is a progressive and endless process and the *rasika* feels the work of art drawing nearer and nearer to him according as his taste and concentration become deeper and deeper and with every discovery of a new element in the work of art comes the experience of a strange unearthly happiness, felicity, whose first impact on the nervous-emotional apparatus is a shudder. The response of the vital to the music of Krishna is very similar to the response of a *rasika* to a work of art. And the end is the endless journey to no end, the continuous experience of the essential creative delight. The audience is not limited to one individual vital being, but the whole of Nature is arrested in her habitual movements and diurnal routines by the entrancing music. Suspending her externalising acts, she waits in a trance of silence, pause, all her energies captivated, bewitched and focussed and flowing towards one object, enamoured. She cannot do justice with one aspect of her being to this infinite artistry and so she widens and opens her vast, multitudinous chambers or rather they are opened by, and they respond spontaneously to, the global music. Who can so completely absorb her entire being and ravish her utterly except her Lord and Lover and Supreme Creator, Jagannatha Krishna ? The shock of recognition makes her go into a wide, enamoured pause.

The One to whom all her seeking through her millionfold creatures in the physical, vital and mental domains, has been directed, the Superconscient Eternal Anandamaya, has come pouring all Himself in rapturous tunes. So she opens in a wide enamoured pause to the melody. Her aspiration is no vain dream. She can now confidently hope through a complete opening of all herself to the music, to touch her lord, then clasp him in a tight embrace and finally become one with Him and be Him always. "To know, possess and be the Divine Being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilit or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering, to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, to discover and realise the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation, —this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of Nature in her terrestrial evolution."

V

This is the day of victory and fulfilment of the aspiration of the earth-consciousness for the Divine Consciousness.

> For this one moment lived the ages past;
> The world now throbs fulfilled in me at last.

The long and chequered history of cosmic evolution is a divine comedy of three great protagonists, God, Man and Nature. Universal Nature aspires for the Transcendent Divine with the individual Man as the intermediary. All that has gone before this moment of descent of the Divine Lord into Matter has been a preparation for it. All culture has helped in making the various faculties in man, mind, heart, life and body plastic, pure and strong enough to receive and manifest the divine plenitude. All spiritual sadhanas of the past have opened up progressively the different

phases of the multiple Personality and levels of the Divine Consciousness and have attuned the faculties to these supernal verities. This is the time for a grand and mighty synthesis and an uplifting of all by the Divine Lord to the highest height and with the almighty power to bring about the transformation of the earth. All the ages past with their contributions have looked forward to the present moment of the advent of the Divine Love and Divine Ananda. The evolutionary urge which threw up in successive ages out of the Inconscient, Matter, Life and Mind and put them all together in the same house of Man so that they could be harmonised and integrated around a divine centre and lifted to higher and higher levels of the Spirit, reaches now the decisive stage when a new creation becomes possible. All time (the ages past) finds its redemption in the present moment when Eternity or the Timeless has chosen to descend and bind all moments each to each by a divine piety into an eternal Day, so that all streams of Time flow into the sea of Eternity. Time and all her products shall henceforward receive their true value and place in the scheme of things to be organised by an Eternal Wisdom.

For this one moment lived the ages past.

So at last, after a very long period of travail and many tragic experiments the world finds in the integral Yogi the bringer of the Ananda she has been aspiring for, not for himself in any egoistic sense, for his sadhana has been cosmic in its proportions, so that the streams of Ananda descending into the mortal tenement of a Purna Yogi will naturally overflow into the world around. The stage is set for the Supramental Manifestation. So at the moment of fulfilment of Integral Yoga in an individual sadhaka the world beats in a strong but rhythmical pulsation of ecstasy of fulfilment of its aspiration.

At last I find a meaning of soul's birth

....

The world now throbs fulfilled in me *at last*.

The secret of the mystery of cosmic evolution and the birth of the soul in this world is Krishna's Love and Ananda. World and Man exist in Him and for Him. Krishna is the meaning and significance of all existence and manifestation and

> 'Henceforth shall Krishna's dance through Nature move,
> His mask of sweetness, laughter, rapture, love !'

M. V. SEETARAMAN

THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER (VIII)

EDUCATION

WE have had a rapid survey of the principal theories and methods of modern education, and noted the new trends that are slowly infiltrating, like the first streaks of the dawn, into the dusky disorder of the present. The excessive and almost exclusive squint towards technology, which is induced by the economical problem eclipsing the deeper and more fundamental problems of life, is doomed by its own excess. For all excess is an outrage upon the principle of harmony which keeps the worlds together in the midst of their evermultiplying diversities and apparent conflicts and oppositions. The submerged layers of the human being, the higher dimensions of human consciousness are slowly opening, and with the growth of a new consciousness man will inevitably turn from his obsession with his mean, material interests to look for the truth and meaning of his life. Not that he will renounce his material pursuits, as does the ascetic, committing the same excess in the inverse direction, but the imbalance will be redressed, and Spirit and Matter shall meet in a loving embrace —Matter consenting to become a transparent vehicle of the self-expressing Spirit. The coming age will be not only an age of outer unity, but of inner harmony and equilibrium.

Let us now cast a hurried glance at the ideal and method of education that obtained in ancient India.

If we go back to the days of the Vedas and the Upanishads, we find that the cardinal principle of education was the awakening and development of the soul of the student with all its instrumental powers and faculties, so that it might lead to an integration of his personality and its perfect self-expression and self-fulfilment in life. Life, a vigorous, creative, harmonious life, marching forward

to the conquest of the supreme Reality and rendering itself an unflawed vehicle of its purpose in the world—this was the ideal of education in ancient India. Those who think that Indian spirituality was averse to any life-fulfilment, and that ancient Indian education was a training for asceticism and other-worldly pursuits are ignorant of the comprehensive spirit of Indian culture. Radhakumud Mukherji rightly stresses this comprehensive spirit when he says : "In ancient seats of learning, there was no divorce between theory and practice, thought and life, speculation and action. Education, true to its literal sense, meant the development of all the faculties of man and included within its purview the totality of interests which make up life and not merely a section thereof, viz, the interests of intellectual life. It was education not merely in the contents of the sacred lore but also in the methods of living and self-culture according to the ideals embodied therein. Thus these seats of ancient learning were also the centres of life, of all that was best and highest in the community, centres of influence which vitalised the country. These ancient schools were not detached buildings of brick and mortar like modern schools, but were colonies in which were centred the talent, the piety, the culture of the community, from which they radiated in all directions. In them was represented the highest level of life marking the high-water mark of the nation's progress from which it gradually filtered down to the lowest planes of society."[1] The hermitages of the Rishis in the Vedic and Upanishadic times and, later, the colossal universities like Nalanda and Takshashila, were veritable nerve-centres of Indian culture. They produced not only scholars, yogis and men of wisdom who shed the light of Truth upon all problems of society and general progress, but imparted sound knowledge of the art of warfare, a thorough training in commerce and industry, in politics and statecraft, and the finer arts and the sciences. In short, they equipped the students to perform different functions in different walks of life, according

[1] *Ancient Indian Education* by Radhakumud Mukherji

to their individual bent and aptitude. Education was dynamic and pragmatic, and it was regarded as a means and not an end —a means to an unfettered development of the inner man with all his inner and outer powers and potentialities. It was, to be precise, the spontaneous flowering of the swabhava that was aimed at in education.

What is this swabhava ? It is not nature, as the word is understood in English. When Pestalozzi says that the nature of the child must determine all the details of its education, to what nature does he refer ?[1] Man has a double nature : one is outer, made up of his superficial instincts, impulses, preferences, prepossessions, tendencies and habits; and the other is inner or rather inmost, the innate nature of his hidden soul, the self-expressive law of his true, uncreated being. The unimpeded flowering of this latter nature was the object of education in ancient India. It should be the object of all education worth the name. When our central being is awakened, and is able to express itself and realise its infinite potentialities according to its self-law, freely, spontaneously, and with the joy and harmony of its spiritual liberty, the very object of its life on earth is accomplished. A society in which men and women are helped by the right kind of education to grow into the creative harmony of their whole being cannot but be a happy and progressive society, raising the whole tone of national and international life and adding a new dimension to the cultural make-up of humanity. The same process of growth which works in physical nature, which makes the flowers bud and bloom in spontaneous beauty, the constellations of the stars sparkle and dance to the impeccable rhythms of the universe, and the cataracts leap and swell into mighty currents in order to flow in nostalgic fervour towards the distant sea, ought to work in every man and woman, undeflected by the obstructions of the outer nature. To weed out the overgrowths and clear away the obstructions is the negative function of education. And it is indispensable to its

[1] What Rousseau means by "original nature" is the ancestral, unsophisticated nature of man, not what we mean by the term, *swabhāva*.

positive function, which is to awaken the central being, the immortal soul in man, and lead it towards its self-fulfilment in life. The discovery of the soul was the fulcrum upon which the whole system of education in the Vedic India functioned. The theories of Varna and Dharma were an outcome of this profound psychological system.

But how to awaken the soul-nature or swabhava of the student? This was done by the mystic ceremony of Upanayana or the investiture of the sacred thread, so far as the education of the first three Varnas, the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, and the Vaishyas, was concerned. There was no caste system then, as we know it today. A shudra boy, if the Guru discerned the psychic fire ready in him, could be easily admitted as a pupil, and enjoyed the privileges of training under the Guru as well as the other pupils, Brahmins or Kshatriyas, whatever they might be. There are many instances of this kind of liberal practice in the education of ancient India.

There were two factors considered as most important in education : the first, the personality of the teacher, and the second, the competence or adhikara of the pupil. The teacher came first in importance. There could be no education without a competent teacher. And what was it that constituted the competence of the teacher ? It was his spiritual stature, his spiritual knowledge, and his power to evoke the soul of his pupil and set it on its way to perfection. Since education is the most vital base upon which to rear the whole structure of society, it must needs be the supreme force for galvanising the entire being of the student and bringing out what is individual and specifically creative in him. To touch one part of his being, the mind or the heart or the body, or even all the three together, is not enough—along with these instruments, the master of the instruments must also be made conscious of himself, conscious of the purpose for which the instruments have been created, and the best way to use them, so that that purpose may be perfectly accomplished. If life is a pilgrimage, the pilgrim must know where he has to go and how

best and quickest he can reach his destination, enduring the hardships, avoiding the pitfalls, and overcoming the dangers of the way. That alone can be called a perfect and purposive education which equips him for this pilgrimage and starts him in the right direction; everything else is a clumsy makeshift or a blind groping. That alone confers freedom, everything else fetters and cramps up the individuality of the student to a senseless convention or a soulless routine. An integrated personality can be the product of only an integrated system of education, and there can be no integration of personality with the central being left undiscovered and unawakened. It can, therefore, be safely asserted, in the light of what has been stated above, that the re-education of the parents and the teachers is the most vital problem of modern education. And this re-education of the educators must be in the spirit of the ancient ideal of rekindling the soul-fire in them, so that once it is kindled, it can kindle the same fire in the students. The problem has to be tackled at the roots, and no tinkering will be of any avail.

The Upanayana ceremony was not a mere ritual; it was a symbolic act of kindling the soul-fire. By his power of self-identification with the being of the student, the Guru realised the actual state of the latter's evolutionary growth, and gave the right touch and stimulus which could make it blossom in a spontaneous harmony. No exclusive insistence on the head, heart or hand of the student was needed; the touch on the centre assured an organic and integral development, just as the right care of the roots ensures an organic and coordinated development of the whole tree. This kindling of the soul-fire was called dwijattwa, a new birth, a Brahma-janma, which, according to Apastamba, "is the superior birth, as it originates from knowledge." This new or second birth is "exempt from age and death", says Manu.

This Upanayana or initiation exemplifies at once the aim and method of ancient Indian education. The aim was, as I have already said, the vitalisation, regeneration and integration of the whole personality of the student, so that it could lead to an integral

fulfilment in life; and the method was, in its primary and essential feature, the spiritual impact and impetus exerted upon the living core, the evolving nucleus of the being. But this initiation did not always lead at once to an integration—it only set the dynamic forces of the being in motion. Students were free to stop short at a half-result, or stray away from the path blazed by the Guru. If they so desired, they might tend towards secular interests and cease to follow out the natural results of their Upanayana. But the Guru's touch, provided the Guru was a knower of the Brahman, was irrevocable, and in a single life or in the course of many lives, it could not but bring about a return of their nature to the path of an integral self-unfolding. For, the soul-fire, once kindled, can flame or smoulder, according as one tends or neglects it, but can never die out.

The fundamental principle guiding the act of initiation was the fitness and aptitude, adhikara, of the student. No superficially egalitarian or democratic sentiment was allowed to do violence to the natural growth of the student by imposing upon it a kind of education or training for which he had no fitness and aptitude. The different stages and rhythms of evolution were clearly recognised and respected. It was not uncommon to find that in the same family the father was a priest, the son a physician, the mother an ordinary housewife, and the daughter a Brahmavadini or knower of the Brahman.

What were the tests of the fitness and competence of the student ? The supreme test was, of course, the actual stage reached by him in his evolution, and the texture and pattern of his psychological armatutre, which only the intuitive insight of the Guru could perceive and determine. Among the other tests, mention may be made of purity (shuchita), freedom from the passions (apramada), intelligence (medha), an austere self-discipline (tapasya) and Brahmacharya or self-consecration to a high spiritual ideal. Those of the first three castes who were impure or unchaste, devoid of self-control, disobedient, and listless or incapable of concentration, were not admitted as pupils; or, if they developed

these defects and foibles after admission, they were expelled. Obedience was held to be of primary and capital importance. Absolute and implicit obedience ensures receptivity, and where there is no receptivity, there can be no gain from the teaching, however lofty it may be. Obedience is attunement, an attunement between the mind of the teacher and that of the taught. Obedience and humility are the sure marks of nobility of character; and formation of character is one of the cardinal ends of true education.

In ancient India education was universal and compulsory. Even girls received adequate education, and some of them went so far as to qualify for the higher knowledge of the Brahman. Those boys who refused to be initiated or receive any education were looked down upon by the society as vratyas or outcaste, and were even punished. "These penances and penalties attaching to the violation of this primary obligation of Upanayana," says Radhakumud Mukherji, "only show to what extent education was valued by Hindu society, and how it was sought by law to make education universal and compulsory among all the three castes which made up Aryan society in those days. They also imply by contrast the supreme efficacy of Upanayana as a purifying influence, a factor of moral and spiritual uplift."[1]

The division of human life into four ashramas indicates that a full and rounded perfection was considered the object of earthly existence, so far as the average man was concerned. After a life of Brahmacharya and the acquisition of knowledge, the student was allowed to go back to the worldly life, marry and perform the duties of a householder as enjoined by the Shastras. The *gārhasthya* or householder's life was not a life of licence and caprice, or an aimless drift; nor was it a life of mere money-making and selfish pursuits. It was a life of hard discipline and sacramental duties and obligations. It was a well-regulated, responsible life, having for its constant aim a steady growth into one's highest spiritual stature, and a conscientious prepara-

[1] *Ancient Indian Education* by Radhakumud Mukherji

tion for the last two ashramas, the *vānaprastha* and the *sannyāsa*. Through all these successive ashramas, one was meant to advance by gradual stages and a progressive fulfilment of the basic urges of human nature—*dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*—to the supreme goal of human life, the eternal peace and beatitude of the divine Reality. No aspect of life was neglected or repressed, but all were developed to their optimum and led on to an integral perfection. But, since it was the individual nature of each student that was held to be the most important factor, departures from the general rule were always welcomed and encouraged, provided that they tended to open up new avenues of fulfilment or revealed an orientation to exceptional possibilities—there was no strait jacket for the man of genius. If a student chose to devote his whole life to the study of the Vedas and the attainment of the *brahmavarcas*, no pressure was ever put upon him to meet the obligations of a householder's life. He was given full freedom to live the holy life of a *naiṣṭhika*.

Śravaṇ, *manan* and *nididhyāsana* or hearing the sacred texts or the teachings of the Guru, pondering them in the silence of the mind, and meditating on them till they pass into the very blood and bones, and the whole consciousness becomes saturated with them—this was the method of study prescribed. But this kind of concentration cannot be possible except by a rigorous observance of Brahmacharya. As Manu says : "Neither the study of the Veda, nor liberality, nor sacrifices, nor any self-imposed restraints and austerities can ever procure the attainment of rewards to a man whose heart is contaminated by sensuality."

Brahmacharya was, then, the first, indispensable condition of education. The word Brahmacharya is used in two senses, of which one is wider than the other. In the wider sense it means the totality of the discipline, physical and psychological, which leads to Brahmavarchasa or the realisation of the luminous knowledge of Brahman. In the restricted sense, it means the discipline of the sexual urge and its sublimation. Writing on

Brahmacharya in his *Brain of India*, Sri Aurobindo says : "At the basis of the old Aryan system was the all-important discipline of Brahmacharya.... The practice of Brahmacharya is the first and most necessary condition of increasing the force within and turning to such uses as may benefit the possessor or mankind. All human energy has a physical basis. The mistake made by European materialism is to suppose the basis to be everything and confuse it with the source. The source of life and energy is not material but spiritual, but the basis, the foundation on which the life and energy stand and work, is physical. The ancient Hindus clearly recognised this distinction between karana and pratishtha, the north pole and the south pole of being. Earth or gross matter is the pratishtha, Brahman or spirit is the Karana. To raise up the physical to the spiritual is Brahmacharya, for by the meeting of the two the energy which starts from one and produces the other is enhanced and fulfils itself.

"This is the metaphysical theory. The application depends on a right understanding of the physical and psychological conformation of the human receptacle of energy. The fundamental physical unit is the retas, in which the tejas, the heat and light and electricity in man, is involved and hidden. All energy is latent in the retas. This energy may be either expended physically or conserved. All passion, lust, desire wastes the energy by pouring it, either in the gross form or a sublimated subtle form, out of the body. Immorality in act throws it out in the gross form ; immorality of thought in the subtle form. In either case there is waste, and unchastity is of the mind and speech as well as of the body. On the other hand, all self-control conserves the energy in the retas, and conservation always brings with it increase. But the needs of the physical body are limited and the excess of energy must create a surplus which has to turn itself to some use other than the physical. According to the ancient theory, retas is jala or water, full of light and heat and electricity, in one word, of tejas. The excess of the retas turns first into heat or tapas which stimulates the whole system, and

it is for this reason that all forms of self-control and austerity are called tapas or tapasya because they generate the heat or stimulus which is a source of powerful action and success; secondly, it turns to tejas proper, light, the energy which is at the source of all knowledge; thirdly, it turns to vidyut or electricity, which is at the base of all forceful action, whether intellectual or physical. In the vidyut again is involved the ojas, or prana-shakti, the primal energy which proceeds from ether. The retas refining from jala to tapas, tejas and vidyut, and from vidyut to ojas, fills the system with physical strength, energy and brain power, and in its last form of ojas rises to the brain and informs it with that primal energy which is the most refined form of matter and nearest to spirit. It is ojas that creates a spiritual force or virya, by which a man attains to spiritual knowledge, spiritual love and faith, spiritual strength. It follows that the more we can by Brahmacharya increase the store of tapas, tejas, vidyut and ojas, the more we shall fill ourselves with utter energy for the works of the body, heart, mind and spirit."

I have given this long quotation so that both the educators and the students may clearly understand why Brahmacharya was considered an indispensable condition of ancient Indian education and that without it no efforts at the reconstruction of modern educations system can ever bear happy fruit. Brahmacharya must be made the very base of all education worth the name, for it alone can nourish and develop to their utmost perfection all the faculties of our composite being, particularly the faculties of the mind, such as thought, reason, memory, imagination etc.

Another principle of ancient Indian education was that all knowledge is within the student himself, and has only to be evoked or called forth by intelligent means by the teacher rather than infused from outside. It is only the right environment that has to be provided, the right and helpful atmosphere that has to be created, and the hindrances and obstructions that have to be cleared away from the path of progress. The most paralysing

of these obstructions is the tamasic, and the most distracting the rajasic elements of the nature of the student. Tamas darkens and immobilises the evolutionary forces of the being of man, and rajas distracts it and deflects it from the right path by passions, heady desires and attachments, and wrong and perverted ideas. The elimination of tamas or inertia, the discipline of rajas, and the awakening and development of sattwa or the principle of light, harmony and happiness, constitute the crux of the problem of the educator. The student has to be taught to develop the sattwic quality in him by the practice of Brahmacharya and peaceful concentration, so that it may be possible for him to turn to the light within him for the attainment of knowledge. If these fundamental qualities of the student's nature are not properly studied and led to their organic development, education may be proud of the information it has imparted, or the avenues of employment and earning money it has opened up, but it will have forfeited its supreme power and privilege of drawing the best and noblest out of the students, forming their character, and aiding in the integration of their personality.

In this connection, Sri Aurobindo draws an illuminating comparison between the creative intellects of the East and those of the West. "In the West", he says, "the highest creative intellects...have achieved sovereignty by limitation, by striving to excel only in one field of a single intellectual province or at most in two ; when they have been versatile it has been by sacrificing height to breadth. But in India it is the greatest who have been the most versatile and passed from one field of achievement to another without sacrificing an inch of their height or an iota of their creative intensity, easily, unfalteringly, with an assured mastery. This easy and unfailing illumination crowning the unfailing energy created by Brahmacharya was due to the discipline which developed sattwa or inner illumination. This illumination makes the acquisition of knowledge and all other intellectual operations easy, spontaneous, swift, decisive and comparatively unfatiguing to body or brain. In these two things lies

the secret of Aryan intellectual achievement. Brahmacharya and sattwic development created the brain of India : it was perfected by Yoga."[1]

I have spoken of the triple method of hearing, pondering and meditating. As an effective preliminary aid to pondering and meditating, was prescribed the practice of avritti or recitation from memory of what the student had heard or read. This avritti or repetition was not a mechanical routine, but a concentrated dwelling of the mind on the words and their meanings, so that their inner truth and significance might reveal themselves in a flash of intuition. The power of words was well known to the ancient teachers. They knew that the vibrations that the words, correctly pronounced, engender have an electric effect upon a calm and attentive mind. But not all words. Only those words which embody the living fire of an inner faith, experience or realisation are veritable dynamos of power. This, indeed, is the secret of the miraculous effect of a mantra upon mind and matter alike. A mantra is nothing but a particular arrangement of words charged with the potency of subtle sound vibrations that mediate between the physical and the supraphysical worlds or levels of consciousness, and induce a precipitation of the light and powers of the latter into the normal economy of the former. What appears as miraculous is not realy mysterious—it is simply the penetration of a higher power into our material world and, as a result of it, an overriding of the normal order and natural laws that obtain here. But there may be mantras of various kinds, representing powers and influences of different levels of consciousness. The miraculous nature of the effect of a mantra does not necessarily argue an infiltration or influx of an authentic spiritual force. All supraphysical worlds or planes are not spiritual. Avritti of the mantras —for the Vedic hymns are, in truth, mantras—quickens and refines the consciousness of the student and makes it receptive to the spiritual power contained in the words of the mantras or to the influence of the spiritual worlds from which the mantras are

[1] *The Brain of India* by Sri Aurobindo

derived.[1] A lightning flash of intuition, a sudden revelation, or a sparkling stream of inspiration is the natural result, often referred to in the Vedas and the Upanishads, of an intent, concentrated and prayerful recitation of the sacred texts. The most outward reward of repetition is an extraordinary development of memory, a development which was normal in ancient times, but would appear almost incredible to our modern mind.

All subjects were taught in ancient times, as I have already said in the beginning. It is a mistake to think, as many do, that it was only the Vedas and similar texts that were taught, and nothing else. There was no distinction observed between spiritual and secular subjects. Grammar, rhetoric, phonetic, prosody, astronomy, astrology, arithmetic, geometry, algebra, logic, literature, philosophy, law, statecraft, trade, archery, music, dancing, agriculture, cattle-breeding etc., etc. composed the curriculum, and were taught with the thoroughness in which the ancients easily excelled. But the choice of the subjects was determined not by any considerations of the material returns likely to be derived, but by the natural temperament, bent and aptitude of the students. Hereditary inheritance was also taken account of in determining the nature of the study.

Tending the sacred fire, the cattle, and the house of the Guru formed part of the daily work. Manual labour, even menial work, was insisted upon for the training of the hands and the general body, and the development of humility, disinterestedness, and the habits of simple living and high thinking. Difficulties were sometimes put in the way of the student in order to test his sincerity and obedience to the Guru, and bring out the latent powers of calmness and endurance. But it was done out of an immeasurable love for the student; for the true teacher saw nothing but the Divine in his pupil, the Divine breaking into flower. Even on the material plane, the relation between the teacher and the student was like that of a father and a son, a relation of love and devotion.

[1] It must be remembered that all these worlds are there within the being of man. Words of wisdom, repeated correctly and in a concentrated way, serve only to evoke the powers of knowledge and action, latent in him.

I have refrained from any reference to post-Upanishadic systems of education, for, in them one notices a gradual fading out of the pure spiritual element and a growing emphasis on intellectual learning and theological, philosophical and logical training. Many of the basic factors of the ancient times still persisted, as for instance, Brahmacharya, the triple method of shravana, manana and nididhyasana, the ritual of initiation etc., but they were getting more and more formalised, intellectualised, and mechanised by theological dogmas and narrow caste-orthodoxies. The ancient flexibility and harmonising power of spiritual intuition came to be supplanted by the rigidity of the intellect. And yet, what moral, intellectual and spiritual giants even the later systems produced !

The system of education in ancient India of which we have attempted a brief outline above was based on certain psychological truths which are universal and indisputable, and must be incorporated in any modern method that aims at the integration of personality and a perfect development of all the powers, potentialities and faculties of the human organism, subjective and objective. But the whole of that system cannot be adopted today, nor will such a system answer to the changed needs of the modern times. It would be preposterous to think of going back to the past and reverting to a system which served well in its time, but would be obviously out of tune with the psychology of modern man and the social conditions of the present. To weave the essential and imperishable elements of the past into the texture of the basic urges and aspirations of the present would be the right means of shaping the patterns of the future.

In the next article we shall begin an elaborate study of the system of education propounded by the Mother and adopted by the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. It is a new and revolutionary system, unlike any that is current today ; and it has, therefore, to cleave through a barrage of encrusted ideas, frozen perspectives and habits of thought, clamorous considerations of financial returns, and the pervading, materialistic

scepticism and denial of the higher values of life, before it can create an atmosphere congenial to its growth and development, and spread its vitalising and transforming influence upon the outside world. It is an epochal experiment on a universal scale.

RISHABHCHAND

THE LIFE DIVINE

(*An Outline*)

Vol. II

Chapter XXVI

The Ascent Towards Supermind

THE psychic transformation and first stages of the spiritual transformation belong to a unity of knowledge and experience that are already part of things realised; but the supramental change is less explored. The supramental heights have only been glimpsed; and it would be difficult for the normal untransformed mental conception to enter into that radically different consciousness; nor would it be possible to express it in our ordinary mental language. It is only by contact with the intermediate ranges of consciousness that any attempt to describe supramental being could be intelligible. But the mind can look towards it and catch some reflected impression of the Truth.

However different, the higher consciousness in its rudimentary elements is already present in us. We can also expect the process of evolutionary Nature, though greatly modified, to work the same in the highest as in the lower beginnings. We have already seen something of the law and nature of the transition from intellect to spiritual mind; from here we can trace the higher development from spiritual mind towards supermind. This, however, must necessarily be abstract and general through our metaphysical inquiry.

Supermind belongs to the Super-Nature, and hence cannot be entered by mere Mind. All previous emergence of involved

powers have been able to come to the surface by a pressure of the same superior powers already formulated on their own planes. These superior planes create their own foundation in our subliminal parts and from these are able to influence the evolutionary process on the surface. Overmind and Supermind are also involved but they have no formations in our subliminal consciousness; for these greater powers are superconscient. In order that higher principles may emerge their powers must descend into us and uplift us and formulate themselves in our being.

Even without the descent the terrestrial Nature might succeed, after a long evolution, in making contact with the superconscient planes; and thus a slow emergence of consciousness might result. A race of mental beings acting by an intuitive mentality might appear as a first step, followed by an overmentalisation carrying us to the borders of Supermind. But this would be a long endeavour of Nature; and although the higher elements would dominate they would still be subjected to a modification of their action by an inferior mentality. The real transformation can only come through a direct intervention from above; and a total surrender of the lower consciousness to the higher Power. This transformation can take place swiftly if there is a conscious call and will of the awakened mental being, and the response from the supramental Consciousness-Force from above to bring forth the evolving Consciousness-Force from behind the veil. The evolution can be considerably accelerated.

First of all the mental Man must become the psychic and inner mental being master of his energies. He must increasingly become a conscious participant in the action of universal Nature, see that all action in the world is the operation of a universal Energy which is the secret power of the cosmic Spirit veiled in the inconscience of Matter. It is this apparently blind Force that has created physical objects with its own character of mechanical action. In animal life this Force becomes slowly conscious on the surface, forming individual being. It is, however, only imperfectly conscious; it senses and feels without any clear intelli-

gence of what is being done. In the human mind there is the first appearance of an observing intelligence, and also a will to choose. But the consciousness and knowledge are still superficial and imperfect. There is not yet the luminous perception of direct knowing, but only its beginnings in a certain element of instinct and intuition. The normal intelligence is an inquiring reason or reflective thought, but its knowledge is constantly darkened by the half-blind instruments of Nature.

We see that there is a greater and more intimate intuition which would be in luminous identity with Nature's movements. Such entirely intuitive consciousness would be able to grasp things by direct contact or a spontaneous truth-sense born of an underlying identity. This would be the real participation by the individual in the working of the universal Consciousness-Force. The individual would become master of his own energy and also a conscious instrument of the Cosmic Spirit. This conscious participation would come in our transition from the present state of being to that of the supernature.

The rule of this intuitive mental intelligence could not be complete on the earth plane. It would become mixed with the mental, vital and physical consciousness already evolved. It would be able to modify, but is not large enough to abolish the Ignorance; and hence it could not transform the whole consciousness. Even so, our normal intelligence can awaken to the universal Conscious-Force and can direct to a certain extent the inner and outer circumstances, but only in a limited way and not without error. Such conscious participation would enlarge the individual and give him the sensitive perception of the course Nature was taking. As his inner psychic or inner mental being comes more to the front there would be the beginning of a true free will which would mean a fuller perceptive control of the motions of his own being. Even though not completely free, it would be an opening to a higher nature.

Free will does not mean a complete freedom of the egoistic will acting independently; for our natural being is a part of cosmic

Nature, and our spiritual being exists only by the supreme Transcendence. Only by rising to a greater Nature can we be beyond the subjection of the present Nature. Since the individual is included in universal Nature and dependent on the Transcendent, his will cannot act independently. There could be an ascent to the impersonal Reality and acting only as an impersonal cosmic Will. Or the being could feel itself a spiritual instrument acting as a power of the Supreme. In either case there would be a submission to a greater Conscious Power.

Because a new power of being in a higher consciousness would become the instrumentation of a higher Power the will then becomes free from the process of cosmic Mind-Energy, Life-Energy and Matter-Energy. Thus the individual would become more powerful and effective as he realised himself the centre and formation of the universal and transcendent Being and Nature. The individual emerging into a greater light of Consciousness and action of Force would be the instrumentation of an overmental and supramental Consciousness-Force, the power of the Divine Shakti. The evolution itself would be felt as a supreme, universal Consciousness and Force, an omniscient World-Mother raising the being into her supernature. The individual soul would be aware of its purpose, and illimitable and one with the universal and transcendent Reality, and yet an instrument and a spiritual centre.

The opening to the Supernature brings the supramental transformation which effects the passage from the blind automatism of Nature to the infallible action of the truth of Spirit. The automatism of Matter and of a lower life is the beginning of the evolution. It proceeds through the contusions of mind, driven by the inferior Nature but struggling to escape from her limitations. In a higher state the evolution emerges into a spontaneous harmony founded on the spiritual Truth of things. Henceforth the consciousness will follow the line of Truth with a full knowledge, a strong participation and complete delight in action. There will be a luminous perfection of unity with all, and the action

of the universal in the individual as well as the enlightened action of the individual in the universal governed by the Supernature.

But this highest condition must take long to bring about, for there must also be the consent of the lower Nature; all parts of the being must learn to obey the Divine Power. Those parts that are subject to the inconscience and subconscience are deeply rooted, and most difficult to change from the lower law of the Inconscient. The vital is wedded to desire, the mind attached to its own movements, and both are obedient to the law of the Ignorance. There must therefore be the conscious self-direction of the mental being in us to bring about the consent of each part to the action of the higher power, so that Supernature is substituted for the old nature. The second condition (after assent) is surrender of the whole being to the light and power of the Supernature.

The psychic and spiritual transformation must be far advanced before the supramental change can begin. A long, difficult stage of constant effort and tapasya is needed before the complete surrender of the being to the Supreme can be attained. First there is the stage of seeking with a central offering of the heart and soul and mind to the Highest; and then follows a total reliance on its greater Power, until this reliance grows into a complete abandonment of oneself in every part to the working of the higher Truth. This total abandonment can only come if the psychic change has been complete or the spiritual transformation has reached a high state of achievement. This means a surrender by the mind of all its mental formations, opinions and judgements, replaced first by an intuitive and then by an overmental or supramental functioning. There is also demanded a surrender by the vital of its desires, feelings and impulses, and replaced by a luminous, desireless force of a centralised universal knowledge of which life must become an instrument. In the same way our physical part has to surrender its instincts, blind attachments and its faith in the inevitability of the fixed functionings of the physical mind, so that they may be replaced by a new power establishing its great law and functioning in Matter. Even the inconscient and subcon-

scient have to become conscient and susceptible to the higher light. This can be done only by the full emergence of the soul and inner being, and the working of the light and power of the psychic and spiritual will on all parts of the being.

The breaking down of the wall between the inner and outer nature is another necessary condition for the supramental change. All the inner centres must have released their capacities into action; and the psychic entity must be in control. The individual must have also universalised himself, before he can rise to a consciousness belonging to the upper hemisphere. He must be conscious of the higher spiritual Light, Power, Knowledge and Ananda. Although the spiritual change can advance before the psychic is complete, the supramental change can only commence when the supramental Force begins to act directly; and for this the lower Nature must be ready.

A new decisive step can be taken in the spiritual evolution only when the previous main step has been conquered. Even though the conquest of the spirit can be accomplished far speedier through individual endeavour than by Nature's course, the successive steps must still be traversed. Rapidity comes through conscious participation of the inner being together with the power of the Supernature. The material stage of the evolutionary movement was an aeonic progression; the life progression can be measured in millenniums; while the mind development is a matter of centuries. When the conscious spirit intervenes a concentrated pace of evolutionary swiftness is possible. Nature's transformations appear to be miracles, but they are miracles with a method; for a secret all-wisdom governs everything in her.

The steep passage from the spiritualised mind to supermind must be accomplished gradually by degrees. All the higher ranges of Mind are links that make the ascension possible. It is from these higher sources that the secret spiritual Power acts upon the being and brings about the psychic or the spiritual change. It is necessary at first that the pure touch of the spiritual force should intervene in mental nature; a light or power must purify it and uplift

it. This can be done from within through the psychic entity. Or the necessary change can be brought about by an occult descent of the spiritual force from above. The consciousness may be so uplifted that there is union with the Divine by departure from the evolution, a leap or a rapid breaking out of bonds which may necessitate the fall of the body. But for the transformation of the earth, the first touch of spiritualisation must be followed by an awakening to the higher sources. This must go step by step until the native spaces of consciousness are reached.

As in the rest of the movement of Nature, there is the widening of the consciousness, the ascent and then the integration with lower parts of the nature. In the lower grades of the evolution this integration cannot wholly mentalise life and matter, for the subconscient and the inconscient still govern the activities. This makes it difficult for the mind to exceed its own level. By calling in the spiritual force, mind can establish a preliminary change; but this change is not a total perfection. While mind is the instrument, this new consciousness has to work within restrictions. It can only regulate or check the lower action of life and control of the body; but it cannot transform them. A higher dynamic principle must intervene.

But the lower parts of the being must consent before this intervention can come; and this is difficult, since each part prefers its own self-law to a superior law which it feels not its own. The lower being retains a perverse pleasure in darkness and sorrow. A complete and radical change can only be brought about by bringing in the spiritual light into the lower elements until they recognise that their own fulfilment lies there. This illumination is opposed by the Forces of the lower Nature as well by the adverse Forces that live by the world's imperfection.

This difficulty can be overcome by opening up the inner being and its centres of action. It is the inner mind, life and subtle physical consciousness that can create the larger mediating awareness to communicate with the universal and bring its powers to bear on the whole range of the being, even the subconscience.

The spiritual Light and Power descending can thus pervade the life and body; but it cannot entirely get rid of the Ignorance nor overcome the subtle forces that rule the Inconscience. If, however, the psychic and not the mental takes charge, the descent of spiritual force can be more effective. By the working of overmind, the central being can be uplifted to that higher level of consciousness and the new integration of the nature commenced. Together with the increasing spiritualisation of the being, these higher powers of mind can be opened to the intervention of the higher dynamis. The spiritual progression can then turn towards the beginning of the supramental transformation.

Since we enter here into the domain of the infinite the lines of approach are many. We can only consider therefore one particular possibility. In the stairway of Mind to Supermind there are four main stages: Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition and Overmind. Here we enter into a consciousness based on a secret self-existent Knowledge, and acted upon by that light and power. These grades are not merely a power or faculty of cognition but are grades of the substance of spiritual being. When the powers of any grade descend completely into us the very grain of our being and consciousness and all its activities are penetrated and remoulded. Each stage of this ascent is thus a general conversion of the being.

As we descend the scale, Consciousness becomes more and more diminished, admitting less the substance of light. As we ascend, a finer but stronger and more truly spiritual substance emerges. In the descent of these higher grades into us this greater light enters into mind, life and body and changes their diminished substance into the stronger dynamis of spirit. A taking up of the lower by the higher is possible because all are forms of the same consciousness.

Our first decisive step out of our human intelligence is an ascent into a higher Mind, a mind with the clarity of the spirit. It is a power that has proceeded from the Overmind and its special character is luminous thought. It has a sense of oneness

together with the multitudinous aspects of knowledge. It is also the spiritual parent of our conceptive mental ideation—the present high level of man's consciousness.

In this greater Thought there is no need for a step-by-step logic, deductions or inferences. There is not either a swift hazardous divination which belongs to the intelligence probing into the unknown. It is a Knowledge based on all-awareness; and though it can express itself in single ideas, it characteristically expresses a totality of truth-seeing in a single view. Large aspects of truth come into view as we ascend in Mind, but for progress we have to combine these large thought-structures into greater wholes, until we reach a great totality of truth capable of infinite enlargement.

This is the Higher Mind's Cognition. As will it works on the rest of the being through the power of thought. It seeks to purify and create through the power of knowledge; the idea is put forth as a force to be accepted and worked out. The heart, life and will become changed with its power; and even in the body the thought of health can replace its consent to illness. It thus prepares the being for a superior truth of existence.

It has to be pointed out, however, that these higher forces are not all-powerful in their descent as they would be in their own plane of action. They have to enter into the inferior medium of matter and encounter the incapacities of mind and life. Hence the luminous Consciousness is modified; the higher Idea descending into developed mental intelligence has to overcome the mass of formed ideas belonging to the Knowledge-Ignorance. There is thus a power of resistance against the descending Light, refusing or deforming it. Nature gives all Forces the chance to survive, and hence the Ignorance is a collision, struggle and intermixture of forces. But strife must be replaced by harmony, which can only be achieved by the powers of Light and Knowledge. In the heart, life and body, desires, impulses, sensations and habits have to be met; and since these are less conscious than ideas they are more obstinate and have a greater power of resistance. This power of

resistance is the great obstacle which the evolutionary force has to meet.

This obstacle will be there at each stage of this greater ascent. It is therefore necessary to acquire the power of tranquillising the nature, silencing the mind, heart, life and body, in order to allow the higher Light to work. But even so there is the opposition of the universal Ignorance, an occult resistance of the ignorant nature. An established psychic control is desirable therefore as this creates a more general responsiveness. A preliminary spiritual transformation will also reduce the hold of the Ignorance; but neither of these influences eliminates the obstruction altogether. The power of the spiritual Higher Mind, although it can make the first change and prepare for an integration of the being, is necessarily diminished by our mentality and cannot sweep away all obstacles.

A greater force is that of the Illumined Mind, a mind of spiritual light. Here there is the splendour and illumination of the spirit, in addition to the calm and wide enlightenment of the Higher Mind. The inwardly visible Light that here pours down is a spiritual manifestation of the Divine Reality (material light is only a conversion of this Light into Matter). The movements on this level are also swifter, a luminous "enthousiasmos" of inner force and power.

The Illumined Mind works primarily by vision, and not thought. Thought is a fact secondary in the spiritual order. Verbal thought in the form of sound is the channel by which knowledge can appear intelligible in the Ignorance. Thought, however, in its origin, is a cognitive seizing of some truth of things. In mind it is the surface response of perception to the contact of an object, but in the spiritual light there is the deeper response from the very substance of consciousness. Thought in fact creates a representative image of Truth; and to the mind makes Truth an object of Knowledge. But the body of Truth is caught only by a deeper spiritual sight.

The consciousness through sight is a greater power for knowledge than the consciousness of the thinker. It is the inner sight

that seizes something of the substance of Truth; and thus the Illumined Mind, through Truth-sight, can effect a more dynamic integration. It gives the thought-mind a direct inner-vision, the feelings and emotions a spiritual light, and the life urge a spiritual urge and inspiration; finally it throws on the physical mind a transforming light that breaks its limitations. While the Higher Mind produces the spiritual sage, the Illumined Mind develops the seer and the illumined mystic whose soul lives in vision.

These two levels of mind derive their knowledge from a third level, that of Intuition which is nearer to the original knowledge by identity. When the consciousness of the subject meets and penetrates the consciousness in the object, intuition appears. Or when the consciousness looks into itself and feels the truth directly; or when the consciousness meets the Supreme Reality or the spiritual reality in things, there also intuition lights up. It is a penetrating and revealing touch which carries in it sight and conception.

Intuition carries its self-feeling and self-vision of things, but emerging into the lower nature it is subject to a mixture which opens it to misinterpretation. There can be intuition on all levels of the being. The dark intuition from the vital level has to be scrutinised by the discriminating intelligence and reason. But the reason is not a reliable arbiter since its methods are uncertain. Reason in fact is itself largely dependent on intuition, and cannot be the real judge of intuition. Without the liaison of a higher plane of consciousness the flashes of intuition would be difficult to co-ordinate.

Intuition is a ray of a superior light entering into us modified, and again darkened by our ordinary mind consciousness. On its own native level it is pure and unmixed, and its rays are massed together in a play of waves. When this begins to descend it comes as a play of lightning-flashes. But the judgment of reason can only act as an observer, recording the more luminous intimations. To verify an isolated intuition the consciousness must rely on other intuitions. If the consciousness is dependent on the lower intelli-

gence then intuition cannot bring in the higher light.

Intuition has a fourfold power: revelatory truth-seeing, inspiration or truth-hearing, truth-touch or immediate seizing, and a true automatic discrimination of the exact relation of truth to truth. Intuition by its own superior process can therefore perform all the action of reason. The mind, heart, life, sense and physical consciousness have already their own power of intuition; but the pure power descending can impart to them a deeper perception. It can change the whole consciousness into the stuff of intuition; and thus a certain integration takes place. In the Inconscience, however, the intuitive light is hampered, and cannot be radically effective.

The intuitional change must lead to the higher ascent to the Overmind which is a principle of global knowledge. Only by an opening into the cosmic consciousness is the overmind ascent and descent made possible. To the vertical ascent must now be added a vast horizontal expansion of consciousness; that is, the inner being must have replaced the surface mind by its deeper and wider awareness. When overmind descends the predominant ego-sense is lost in a largeness of being. Thought itself manifests from above, and all individual intelligence is now a revelation or illumination. Feelings and sensations are felt as waves from the same cosmic immensity. In this boundless largeness all sense of individuality may disappear, and a total cosmic consciousness left. Personality becomes a field of manifestation, so that the sense of delight is felt at all points in an unlimited consciousness.

There can be many formulations of the overmind consciousness. Instead of cosmic diffusion, there may be the sense of the universe in oneself, an identification with the All. In one state the individual identifies himself with all in the cosmos; in another there is an inclusion of all beings in oneself. All movement is a free play of universal Nature to which one responds with a dynamic identity. But yet the complete overruling presence of the Cosmic Self or something instrumental to the Transcendent can come in. This centralising action opens up the true individual being, one with

the supreme Self and yet a cosmic centre, that replaces the ego.

These first general results of the foundation of overmind consciousness open up innumerable developments. It is experienced as a consciousness and action full of Light and Truth, with a universal beauty and delight and a constant play of possibilities. If the overmind gnosis intervenes then a wide and plastic structure can develop, in which all spiritual experiences are taken up, and all experiences of mind, life and body are spiritualised. The movements of intuition, illumined sight and thought are made global, and the whole nature, knowledge and feeling become all-embracing, cosmic.

The overmind change is the consummating movement of the spiritual transformation. It takes up all that is in the three steps below and raises their workings to their highest power, giving them a universal wideness of consciousness and power. But it is not the final possibility of the spiritual evolution. It is the highest power of the lower hemisphere, founded in a cosmic unity, but acting in division and the interaction of the multiplicity. Although it does act in the Ignorance, yet it works out all possibilities, acting in each according to the fundamental meaning of its cosmic formula. Thus in earth-life it works on the basis of nescience, which resulted from the lower nature's separation from its origin. Although it can give an action of universality to the individual, yet it cannot lead Mind beyond itself. Only the supreme self-determining truth-action of supermind can manifest what is transcendent. If the evolution ended with Overmind then the spiritual awareness could only go further by allowing the soul to depart from its cosmic formation into the Transcendence.

The descent of overmind would be able to transform in each person his inner and outer being, but it would leave the basis of Inconscience untransformed. Outside its own sphere of illumination there would still be the original darkness. Also Overmind would be able to develop the separate possibility of one or more spiritual formations. Thus there might evolve a spiritual community as well as spiritual individuals but each would work

out its independent existence. The principle of unity taking all diversities into itself would not yet be there. There would be no security against the downward gravitation of the Inconscience which swallows all things that arise out of it. The descent of Supermind could alone liberate the earth field from this pull of the Inconscience. The transition from overmind to Supermind and a descent of Supermind must therefore intervene.

Overmind penetrating our being, which is dependent on mind, would establish in it a greater power and intensity of gnosis which has originated from supermind. This influx would continue until the supramental force itself could take up the transformation and reveal the spiritual truth to earthly being, finally pouring the supramental power and knowledge into the whole nature. With the ascent of the soul a complete transformation of the Ignorance can take place.

This gives a structural map of the supramental ascent in its separate steps. The soul is as a traveller mounting the degrees of consciousness, each a separate body of conscious being; and each a status that has to be complete before the next station can be secure. But evolutionary Nature is not a logical series; it acts by the interpenetration and interaction of ascending powers. The higher descends into the lower and alters it; but the lower also in its ascent is sublimated. There are thus an abundant number of different intermediate degrees of consciousness, and so there cannot be any clear-cut, successive stages, but a complexity of movement. The individual is thus a climber who at each step has to build up and redescend in order to rebuild. The movement as a whole is like a mounting tide, or an advancing army whose main body is occupied in consolidating its hold on the traversed territory. Such is the integration needed for the entire supramental change.

Nature does not follow a clearly determined course which our logical intelligence demands. As in the evolution of the past where life and mind have created a more complex and perfect organisation of Matter, so in the spiritual evolution the mind

grows in the luminosity of the spirit, and the higher spiritual grades of Consciousness begin to manifest, sometimes one or the other or all together. An Overmind light may descend and take the lead while the intuitive, illumining and higher grades of mind are incomplete. Thus the action of the higher power greatly helps in the transformation of the lower. Thus the illumination and higher thought need the help of intuition, while intuition needs the help of overmind. Overmind itself is not integrated until the higher mind and the illumined mind have been taken up into intuition and intuition taken up into the all-sublimating overmind energy.

Integration is not only an ascent of the soul but a descent of the higher consciousness to transform the lower nature which resists and obstructs the descent, or at least seizes and enslaves the new power to its own way of action. If the higher power descend into the heart or into the vital being the results are more mixed and imperfect. The descending power can only effect an incomplete occupation, partly of the new and partly of the unchanged lower order. All ranges of mind cannot be transmuted at once, and the mind's action itself is penetrated by the vital and physical. Thus it is necessary for the transforming power to descend into the emotional nature and the vital centres and finally into the physical nature. Still there is the subconscient and inconscient foundation. It is a slow retreat with return attacks, in which the higher influx occupies each time more conquered territory.

Because of the division of our being into outer and inner nature, a further difficulty is that the power of consciousness must take in more than one status at a time. The inner readily receives, but the outer is more under the influence of the Ignorance and the Inconscience and is slower to receive and assimilate. This necessitates a constantly repeated labour of adoption and orientation. Even when the inner and outer nature of the individual are unified, he still has to meet the invasion of the external influences from outside, which are opposed to the new spiritual consciousness.

The spiritualised individual cannot become universalised unless he receives the world influences. The spiritual inner consciousness has to meet these influences either by obliterating them or transforming them; or they may be forced themselves to receive the spiritual influence and carry it into the world. The environmental being itself must be steeped in the spiritual light, and this is a difficult perfection. It is always easier to spiritualise the inner parts; but such introspective perfection is not the integral perfection.

The essential difficulty is that the substance of our normal being is moulded out of the Inconscient; all our knowledge is enveloped by this. It is this nescience that has to be transformed into superconscience. Until then the nescience is compelled to swallow up all that enters it. There is thus a diminution of its truth and power, or at least a limitation of its force. Love, for example, can affirm itself as an inner principle but it must occupy the whole being before the individual feeling and action can be moulded by the law of love. And even the perfected individual can be rendered ineffective by the hostile nescience. In the Inconscience is a blind Necessity which prevents the possibilities that emerge from establishing their free action. A mixed and diminished play is the result.

A transformation of human nature results when the substance of the being is steeped in the spiritual principle and all its movements are a harmonised movement of the spirit. But the Inconscience opposes the higher powers with its own inexorable law; life is met with death, and Light with a background of darkness, and the freedom of spirit with incapacity and Inertia. Only the supramental Force can overcome this difficulty of the fundamental Nescience.

A supramental change of the whole being takes place when the involved supermind emerges to join with the supramental light descending from the Supernature. The individual is here the instrument, but the isolated transformation is not enough and may not be permanent unless the individual becomes the centre

for the supramental Consciousness-Force to be established in the terrestrial workings. This would mean the appearance in the world of a gnostic being and a gnostic Nature. An emergent supramental Consciousness-Force must be active on earth and also an organised instrumentation of the Spirit must take place in the life and body. All intermediate changes are only partial and insecure. On the basis of the supramental principle, the intervening powers of Overmind and spiritual Mind can reach their perfection. They would be steps in the ascent of consciousness in the world by which the embodied mental being could climb into the gnosis. Thus the divine life on earth would be manifested.

N. PEARSON

REVIEWS

I

The World as Will and Representation. *By Arthur Schopenhauer.* 2 Vols. pp. 1221, Price. $17.50. Pub. The Falcon's Wing Press, Indian Hills, Colorado.

It was nearly seventy-five years ago that an English translation of the *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* by Arthur Schopenhauer was first made available by Haldane and Kemp. Since then the original German text has undergone several revisions in the light of the corrections and additions found in the papers of the author after his death. The final and definitive edition was brought out by Dr. Arthur Hubscher in 1937 and this is the text used for the present English translation which has taken Mr. E. F. J. Payne, secretary of the British Schopenhauer Society, over twenty years to bring to its high perfection. It is pointed out that the earlier translation by Haldane and Kemp suffered from more than a thousand errors and omissions rendering an accurate translation all the more imperative. Apart from a scrupulous exactitude in his rendering of the text, Mr. Payne has also translated all the many interesting quotations from foreign authors by Schopenhauer. In addition there is a valuable Index which facilitates reference.

The World as Will and Representation[1] is issued in two volumes, the first containing the main thesis of the author, substantially as it was first published in 1818 and the second consisting, so to say, of his commentaries, illustrations and discussions around the theme of the first, which were published as supplementaries

[1] The word *Vorstellung* is usually translated as Will. Mr. Payne does it as Representation and adds in explanation : "Its primary meaning is that of 'placing before' and it is used by Schopenhauer to express what he himself describes as an 'exceedingly complicated physiological process in the brain of an animal, the result of which is the consciousness of a picture there.'

in the second edition of the work in 1844. The First volume comprises four Books[1] followed by an Appendix giving a reasoned criticism of the Kantian Philosophy on which Schopenhauer claims to base himself[2]. The Second Volume runs into fifty chapters of discussions arranged supplementwise to the Four Books, and covers an incredible variety of subjects, from Love to Mathematics, Music, History, Aesthetics, Women, Death and so on. The style is vigorous, remarkable for its clarity and is lined with a sly sardonic humour—something quite unexpected of an intellectual avatar of the metaphysical spirit of Kant, though in keeping with his enunciation of the gospel of doom.

For truly, Schopenhauer is a prophet of gloom. To put his philosophy in general terms, in brief: the universe is an expression of a Cosmic Will which is manifesting itself in a thousand ways; the individual is only one among its million circumstances; death no less than life serves its career of becoming, pain as much as joy, sin as well as virtue. It is in vain that the individual strives to maintain himself against the surge of forces which are the shoot-

[1] The World as Representation. First Aspect;
The World as Will. First Aspect;
The World as Representation. Second Aspect;
The World as Will. Second Aspect.

[2] In fact he insisted upon a prior reading of his work, *On the Fourfold Root of Sufficient Reason* (1813) for an understanding of his later and main work on Vorstellung, as it contains his epistemology derived from the ideality of space, time and the categories of Kant. He also accepted the Kantian Thing-in-itself which he came to identify with his Will later on. According to Schopenhauer our senses first supply the data; then the faculty of cognition creates a mental picture of the world which is a 're-presentation', a *Vorstellung*, not an imagination. This representation is the object to the subject of our knowing consciousness and the relation or connection of the object and the subject is expressed by the *Principle of Sufficient Reason*. "All our representations are divisible into four classes which impart to the Principle of sufficient Reason its fourfold root. The first aspect of this principle is that of becoming, where it appears as the law of causality and is applicable only to changes. Thus if the cause is given the effect must of necessity follow. The second aspect deals with concepts or abstract representations..if certain premisses are given the conclusions must follow. The third aspect of the principle is concerned with being in space and time, and shows that the existence of one relation inevitably implies the other.. The fourth aspect deals with actions, and the principle appears as the law of motivation, which states that a definite course of action inevitably ensues on a given character and motive." (*Translator's Introduction*)

ings of the Universal Will. The personal will is only a part, a segment of that Will and cannot hope to prevail against it. It is ever faced with the challenge of other part-wills like itself—all under the menacing shadow of the Master Will. There is only one issue for the individual and that is effacement of himself from this field of want which is the parent of will, of strife which is the child of clamorous will. How is that to be done ? In each one there is a faculty of knowledge which is willy-nilly dominated by the will formulated in his being, on its surface as well as in its depths. Even his knowledge of the world is coloured and shaped by the dictates of this inherent will; things exist to us as they are represented by our faculties which are the servants of the will. Now this faculty of knowledge, the intellect, should be steadily and firmly *disassociated* from the will-element and a condition of will-less contemplation built up so that the workings of the Will cease to affect the being any more and man slowly but wisely drifts outside the inexorable life-current and attains peace above strife.

We need not discuss here how far such a view could serve as an adequate explanation of the meaning of existence. We would merely observe that this is only a partial truth, only an arc which yields its full meaning when the whole circle is completed. There can be no Will without a Being to will. A universal Will can be exercised only by a Universal Being. And the will of such a Being presupposes a purpose which surely cannot be Its own extinction. However, to turn to some of the more interesting portions of the book.

Schopenhauer, it will be recalled, was one of the foremost intellects of Europe in the last century, who were utterly amazed by their discoveries of the profound contents of the Vedas, Upanishads and other Indian scriptures through the translations in continental languages. Some of his observations in this connection bear repetition even today, a century after they were made. Referring to the Vedas and the Upanishads, he writes :

"The conviction here described and arising directly out of

the apprehension of nature must have been extremely lively in those sublime authors of the Upanishads of the Vedas, who can scarcely be conceived as mere human beings. For this conviction speaks to us so forcibly from an immense number of their utterances that we must ascribe this immediate illumination of their mind to the fact that, standing nearer to the origin of our race as regards time, these sages apprehended the inner essence of things more clearly and profoundly than the enfeebled race, 'as mortals now are', is capable of doing." (P. 475, Vol. II)

While on the subject of Rebirth and transmigration of souls, he draws attention to the Wisdom of the Vedas as embedded in the Upanishads and observes :

"Never has a myth been, and never will one be, more closely associated with a philosophical truth accessible to so few, than this very ancient of the noblest and oldest of peoples. Degenerate as this race may now be in many respects, this truth still prevails with it as the universal creed of the people, and it has a decided influence on life today, as it had four thousand years ago. Therefore Pythagoras and Plato grasped with admiration that *non plus ultra* of mythical expression, took it over from India or Egypt, revered it, applied it, and themselves believed it, to what extent we know not. We, on the contrary, now send to the Brahmans English clergymen and evangelical linen-weavers, in order out of sympathy to put them right, and to point out to them that they are created out of nothing, and that they ought to be grateful and pleased about it. But it is just the same as if we fired a bullet at a cliff. In India our religions will never take root ; the ancient wisdom of the human race will not be supplanted by the events in Galilee. On the contrary, Indian wisdom flows back to Europe, and will produce a fundamental change in our knowledge and thought." (Vol. I, P. 356-7)

A truer prophecy has not been uttered !

M. P. PANDIT

Rigvedavu Bhagavatsvarupavu. *By Vidvan N.S. Anantarangacharya,* Sanskrit College, Bangalore. Pp. 61, Price Re 1.00.

While reviewing, in these pages, an earlier work of the author[1] on the Vedic heritage, we had occasion to commend his efforts to make known the real character of the Wisdom that lies concealed under the liturgical exterior of the hymns of the Veda. The present book, the second in the series, on the *Rig Veda* and the *Nature of the Godhead,* continues the good work. It consists of 75 carefully selected verses—dwelling upon several aspects of the Divinity—from all over the Rig Veda with word-for-word renderings in Kannada and copious annotations underlining the unity of thought that runs throughout and recalling parallel utterances in the Epics, the Upanishads and other authentic Sanskrit literature.

It had been all along propagated by scholars from the West —we trust no one gives serious credence to that theory today— that the Rishis of the Veda were all polytheists, worshipping a multitude of gods according to the exigencies of the situation. Not only that, but they had the clever habit of praising each god as if he were the highest when he was addressed : for this tendency a special term, *Henotheism,* was coined by Max Müller. The turn to monotheism, worship of only One God, we wire told, came much later in the age of the Upanishads, though the beginnings of this movement are to be seen in some of the hymns of the latest (?), the tenth Book. Needless to say this is a very superficial and misleading view of the matter. As Sri Aurobindo has pointed out in his exposition of the Secret of the Veda, to the Rishis of the age represented by the Rig Veda, the Supreme Godhead is always One, though for purposes of manifestation there are put out several emanations of Himself, called by different names. And they are not merely names ; they are powers and personalities of the One Godhead, individuations for specific purposes in the building and the governance of the Universe.

[1] *Rigvedada amogha suktiratnagalu.*

"All the Gods with a single mind, a common intuition, move aright in their divergent paths towards the one Will."[1]

Sri Anantarangacharya draws attention to this special feature of the Gods in the Hymns and cites the authority of Badarayana, Sayana and Yaska in support. Indeed, Yaska is quite unambiguous on this point. *Eka ātmā bahudhā stuyate*, the One Atma is lauded manywise, he declares. (Nirukta VII.4) The Gods are, besides, *itaretara janmānaḥ, itaretara prakṛtayaḥ ;* they have a mutuality of birth, a mutuality of nature. Each is not only an emanation of the Supreme Godhead, but he has behind him all the other Gods to support him, i.e. the whole of the Godhead is at his back. Each God gives birth to the other gods, he is the substance out of which the others are formed : now it is Surya giving birth to Agni, now it is Agni who brings into being Surya and so on. To quote a typical Rik illustrating this truth :

Thou art Varuna, O Fire, when thou art born, thou becomest Mitra when thou blazest high ; in thee are all the gods, O son of force, thou art Indra for the mortal giver. (Rv. V.3.1.)**[2]

With the advent of Agni, the Force of Will and Aspiration, the dross of impurity in the being is burnt up and there forms a state of vast Purity embodied by Varuna ; as the force of Agni breaks down the wall of ego and self-regarding desire leading to strife, there is the birth of Love and Harmony of Mitra in the being of the seeker preparing the ground for the manifestation of the other Powers of the Godhead ; to the mortal who gives himself to the Divine, Agni reveals himself as the bounteous Lord of the Divine Mind, raining the showers of illumination.

The entire universe has been brought into existence out of the primal darkness by God Agni :

The whole world was swallowed and concealed in darkness ; Agni was born, and it became manifest. The Deities, the Earth, the heavens, the waters and the plants gloried in his friendship. (Rv. X.88.2)

[1] Rv. VI. 9.5.
[2] Translations thus marked are by Sri Aurobindo.

The learned author points out how in the Upanishadic account of Creation also, it is Tejas, Fire, that is mentioned as the first to be produced by Brahman on the move to create. He is the first birth of life in sapless, dry matter, *śuṣkād jīvo janiṣṭhaḥ* (Rv. I. 68.2). He is the conscious thinker in those who are not seers, *ayam kaviḥ akaviṣu pracetaḥ* (Rv. VII. 4.4.). To recall another Rik which describes the ubiquitous nature of Agni :

He is the being and non-being in the supreme ether, in the birth of the Understanding in the lap of the indivisible mother. Fire comes to us as the first-born of the Truth, he is the Bull and milch Cow in the original existence. (Rv. X.5.7).**

Equally fundamental is the position of Indra. For, the Divine Lord as Indra, is not only the ruler of the heavens of the gods but of this world of ours as well, *ubhayasya rājan*, sovereign of both the worlds (Rv. VI.19.1), *bhuvo janasya divyasya rājā* VI.22.9). It is he who breaks through the thick opacity of the hard Rock of Matter and floods all sides with the Waters of divine Consciousness, who as the monarch of the peoples, or the outbreak of the Dawn of Knowledge, forms the firmaments of the Pure Mind and makes the Sun of Truth shine aloft. (VI.30.5).

He has not only created the universe and the beings that people it but has also distributed formulations of his Becoming in appropriate embodiments :

In growths of Earth he has extended the breath of life; set Force in the Horse, Milk in the Cow ; set the *Will in the hearts*, Agni in the Waters ; in the heaven the Surya, and Soma in the Hill. (Rv.V.85.2)

It is he again that has concentrated himself at certain points in the cosmic Extension as leading centres of manifestation, the Vibhutis :

Brahma, the king of the Gods, Leader of the Seers, of the Sages the Rishi, the Bull of the creatures ; Falcon amid the birds of flight, among fell weapons the Axe...**(Rv. IX 96.6).

As the author observes, one is naturally reminded of the narration of his Vibhutis by the Lord in the Gita, which ends with the famous declaration :

Whatever beautiful and glorious creature thou seest in the world, whatever being is mighty and forceful, know to be a very splendour, light, and energy of Me and born of a potent portion and intense power of my existence. (X.41)

To the author, as to us, the Rig Veda is essentially a Book of Upasana, a Record of the spiritual strivings and realisations of the ancient Rishis serving as a guide to posterity on the Road of the Yoga of fufilment of the human into the Divine and the blossoming of the Divine into the human. The Lord of the worlds is not only in the heavens above, not merely in the expanse around in the universe, but he is also stationed in the Heart of every creature :

An immortal Light, set inward for seeing, a swiftest mind within in men that walk on the way**. (Rv. VI.9.5).

He holds in his hands all mights ; sitting in *the secret cave* he upholds the gods in his strength. Here men who hold in themselves the Thought come to know him when they have uttered the Mantras formed by the heart. (Rv. I.67.2)

By the chants of the Mantras that affirm His omnipresence and omnipotence, the lauds that glorify, the very body of God grows in stature ; *vardhatām asya tanuḥ stomebhirukthaiśca śasyamāna.* (Rv. VI.24.7)

To this Master of existence, at once the most ancient, *pūrva*, and the ever-new, *naviyasa*, give, give your soulful adoration, give yourself wholly. For such a one attaineth to the illumined station which is the Goal most cherished, *yujyaṁ cit abhyasat* (Rv. I.156.2), where the final word is :

Tvam asmākaṁ, tava smasi, Thou art ours, We are Thine. (Rv. VIII.92.32).

M. P. PANDIT

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